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A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF CIVILISATION IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

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Norman tympanum, uncovered under the arch of the North Doorway of Stoke-under-Ham Church, Somersetshire, in 1857.

On the right and left respectively are represented two signs of the Zodiac, Leo and Sagittarius. Signs of the Zodiac were often regarded as symbolical of the Twelve Apostles as well as of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

The symbolism here may have a double significance :

(1) Leo stands for the Christian, who is constantly being wounded by the arrows of Sagittarius, *i.e.* the Devil. The birds on the Tree of Life on their plane and the Agnus Dei are witnesses of the Christian's life of sorrow in this world.

(2) It has reference to the civil war of Stephen and Matilda, Sagittarius being a crest sometimes borne by King Stephen, and Leo standing for Matilda's coat-of-arms.

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A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF CIVILISATION IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

1066–1500

BY

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Ἔρχεται ὥσπηρ κύκλος αὐξανομένη
PLATO, *Republic* iv. 424

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PREFACE

THE plan of this brief sketch of the history of the Middle Ages turns upon the following suppositions :—

1. That the importance of a historical event is in proportion to the greatness and permanence of its results—so far as they can be ascertained. Hence a great many events which find a place in the ordinary political histories of England, and which appear to have had little lasting result (*e.g.* the endless wars of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries) are altogether omitted. The space thus saved is used to describe, on a much larger scale than is usual in a book of this size, the origin of great institutions and discoveries which have had a permanent effect on our lives and habits to-day, *e.g.* Parliament, Trial by Jury, Universities, the Origin of Gunpowder, Paper, Printing, etc.

2. That the true explanation of many of the great movements of the Middle Ages lies in the social and economic needs of great masses of people rather than in the personal whims of princes. *E.g.* the influence of the wool trade on our relations with Flanders and France in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

3. That history is a record of development, that is, of progress and of decay ; and that it is also a science the purpose of which is to investigate the causes of progress and of decay.

4. That all history should be read in the light of present-day problems, and that features which may throw a light upon them should be described at length. Hence the Medieval Trade Gilds, for instance, have had considerable space allotted to them because of the interest they have aroused in view of modern industrial troubles.

5. That the history of one race or people cannot be put into a water-tight compartment and separated from that of its neighbours. It is impossible to understand English history without knowing something of the history of the world. Hence, whenever England is drawn into a great world movement, as in the rise of Universities or in the Crusades, the movement is described from a world standpoint.

6. That the study of local history has much light to throw upon the general history of this country; and that the study of remains of the Middle Ages in museums and in the surviving Castles and Churches of the period is a help to the understanding as well as to the imagination, and is of great cultural value in itself. Hence the comparatively large space devoted to Medieval Architecture.

The writer has based many of his conclusions on ten years' study of original documents. As regards secondary authorities, it is impossible to acknowledge the source of every piece of information given. It is, therefore, hoped that the following list of Modern Books recommended for further study, and the others mentioned in the body of the work, will be accepted, once for all, as a sufficient acknowledgment.

Modern Works largely drawn upon in the preparation of this volume, and useful for further study :—

Social England, vols. i. ii. and iii. Edited by H. D. Traill. (Cassell & Co. Ltd.)
Medieval England: Mary Bateson.
Lipson: *Economic History.*
Ashley: *Economic History*, vol. i. (Longmans & Co.)
Oman: *Art of War in the Middle Ages.* (Methuen & Co.)
Industry in England: H. de B. Gibbins.
Poole: *Medieval Thought and Learning.* (S. P. C. K.)
Prutz: *Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzüge.*
McKechnie: *Magna Carta.*
Gross: *The Gild Merchant.* (Oxford University Press.)
Rashdall: *Universities in the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. (Oxford University Press.)
Stubbs: *Constitutional History*, vols. i. ii. iii. (Oxford University Press.)
Medley: *Constitutional History.*
Gasquet: *The Black Death.*
Lollardy and the Reformation in England: Gairdner. (Macmillan & Co.) 4 vols.
The Pastons and their England: H. S. Bennet. (Camb. University Press.)
Bridges: *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon*, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press.)
K. Vickers: *England in the Later Middle Ages.* (Methuen & Co.)
H. W. C. Davies: *England under the Normans and Angevins.* (Methuen & Co.)
Niemayer and Snape: *Piers Plowman Social Histories*, Books ii. and iii. (George Philip & Son.)
The Victoria County Histories, especially Berkshire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire and Somersetshire.

Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th edit.), articles "Crusades," "Templars" and "Typography."
The Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. ii. (Camb. University Press.)

The present work is intended for the general reader who has picked up a superficial knowledge of the political history of the Middle Ages, and wishes to know something of its deeper significance. It covers the Board of Education's new Syllabus (1925) for the Training College Certificate Examination Scheme 3, and is based on lectures given during the past three years to students reading for this examination.

R. TREVOR DAVIES.

OXFORD, *December* 1923.

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CHAPTER I

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

§ 1. Contrast between Modern England and England in 1066.
- (*a*) The Population, urban and rural.
- (*b*) The Manor and Manorhouse.
- (*c*) The Standard of Comfort.
- (*d*) The Inhabitants of the Manor.
- (*e*) The situation of the populous areas.
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§ 2. The Course of the Conquest.

§ 3. Norman Buildings.
- (*a*) The Castle.
- (*b*) The Church.

§ 4. Feudalism.
- (*a*) Its meaning.
- (*b*) How the Conqueror obviated its worst evils.

§ 1. Milton once sneeringly alluded to the struggles of the Middle Ages as "battles of kites and crows." For the earlier part of the Middle Ages—the Dark Ages—this description may not be altogether unjustified. But the true Middle Age, which emerged from the darkness in the Eleventh Century and lasted on till its collapse in the Fifteenth, is a period of rapid progress, rich in institutions, in ideas and in moral and spiritual values. In order to appreciate this progress it is necessary, however, to attempt a very difficult thing—to see England and her inhabitants at the time of the Norman

Invasion of 1066, one of the greatest turning points of her history. England to-day is so unlike the England of those days that it would be easier to enumerate the points of resemblance than the points of difference. But, as this would not serve any purpose, an attempt must be made to contrast England to-day with Eleventh Century England, selecting the most salient features. In doing so we are greatly assisted by the fact that less than twenty years after the Norman Invasion William the Conqueror caused to be compiled the famous *Domesday Book* (1086). It is a document to be used with the utmost caution. It has been a snare to countless writers, who seemed to imagine that it was an Eleventh Century edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and failed to realise that it was compiled to safeguard the king's possessions and revenue and not for the purpose of satisfying the curiosity of posterity. Nevertheless, there is no historical document of this country until almost modern times that gives so careful an account of England and her inhabitants. Its dry details of the numbers of villeins and the hides of cultivated lands and the worth of mills in every manor seem bald enough upon the surface; but, when properly worked, prove to be an immense mine of information that has never yet been properly explored.

(*a*) Perhaps the most obvious point of contrast between Eleventh Century England and our country to-day is the number of its inhabitants. The population at the accession of the Conqueror was less than one-fifteenth of what it is now. We gather from *Domesday Book* that the number of able-bodied men in the thirty-four counties which it covers was 283,242. Allowing for the six counties not included, for Wales and for

London and Winchester and other towns not surveyed, and making allowance for careless enumeration, and multiplying the number of able-bodied men by five, we shall not be far wrong in estimating the total population of England and Wales at about 2,000,000, as compared with more than 37,000,000 to-day. The contrast is hardly lessened when we consider the occupation of the inhabitants. To-day the great majority of our countrymen are occupied in commerce or manufactures on a large scale, and are dwellers in urban areas. In the Conqueror's time less than five per cent. of the population lived in towns. Quite ninety-five per cent. of the population were engaged in agriculture, and even the townspeople of the largest towns were to a large extent tillers of the soil. In fact, the majority of towns which we hear of in the Norman period were little more than large villages. London, of course, stood apart. Its size, compared with that of other towns in 1066, is very much what it is in 1924. Then it was about four times the size of Bristol, the second town in the kingdom, just as it is about four times the size of Birmingham to-day. London, situated at the lowest bridge on the most important river, had an extensive trade and a large foreign population. It was the only town which had an advanced civic constitution. It was the centre of English life, and the voice of the citizens carried with it some weight in national affairs. Its population soon after the Conquest may have amounted to as much as 40,000. Fitz-Stephen, writing in Henry II.'s reign, places it at about ten times this number. The exaggeration is interesting as showing the prestige of the metropolis. After London, in order of size, came Bristol, Norwich, Lincoln, Oxford, York, Exeter and Winchester. These had a population

averaging much less than 10,000 each. Winchester, the old West-Saxon Capital, continued to be the centre of Government in many ways till it was so badly knocked about in the wars of Stephen's reign that it never recovered its position. It was in Winchester that the Domesday Survey was compiled. Here also was the royal treasury of which Henry I. took such care to possess himself after his brother's death in the New Forest.

(*b*) Towns, however, were abnormal things in the Norman period. The mass of the people lived on the land and by the land. Europe at this time may be regarded as a great aggregate of self-centred and self-sufficing manors. The manor is usually a small village averaging perhaps about 150 inhabitants. Almost everything consumed is made in the manor—only a few necessary imports come from outside. The chief import, no doubt, would be salt—so necessary when most of the cattle were killed off in November and their flesh salted for consumption during the winter, the absence of root crops making it impossible to maintain large numbers of cattle during the cold weather. The only other import of importance is iron for ploughs, knives, etc. At the head of the manor was the lord, who might be lord of this manor only and, therefore, resident in it, or he might be lord of tens or hundreds of manors. The king was lord of about one-fifth of all the manors in the kingdom and the various ecclesiastical dignitaries, such as bishops and abbots, probably held rather more than one-fifth. If the lord owned many manors a bailiff represented him in each ; and he himself would be resident for a time roughly in inverse ratio to the number of manors he possessed. Owing to difficulties

of transport medieval nobles went to their food in the place where it grew, instead of having the food from the manors conveyed to them. A great noble with a large retinue might eat up the produce of a manor in a fortnight and would therefore hardly ever spend more than a fortnight in the same place. One of his greatest problems would be to plan out his itinerary for the year. The manor house in which he stayed would at this time be a roughly built structure, mostly if not entirely, of wood. A house which he occupied for so short a time would not be built with much care. It would consist chiefly of a great hall which served many purposes. It was a dining-room for the whole household, a common room, a bed chamber, a court of justice, and, very often, a kitchen as well. In the centre of the hall was the great fireplace, and above it a hole in the roof called a 'louvre,' through which some of the smoke might escape. At the far end of the room was a raised platform on which the lord and his family and most distinguished guests dined. The rest of the room, which was commonly known as 'the marsh,' was arranged with tables on trestles at meal-times for the servants and less distinguished guests. Next to the great hall on the platform side was the 'solar'—a smaller room, in which the lord and his family and most distinguished guests spent their leisure and slept. It would be more carefully built and more luxuriously furnished than the great hall. The hall was strewn with rushes, which, as Erasmus complained in a later age, were rarely changed, and the dirt upon them was often covered up with fresh rushes instead of being removed. The solar, on the other hand, might perhaps boast a carpet. The common people slept on the floor of the hall wrapped each in a blanket—men and women

alike—a fact made still more surprising by the knowledge that medieval modesty did not even provide itself with a night-shirt. In the solar, on the other hand, the occupants usually slept in beds. But the comforts of the age were few. Nearly all the furniture and cooking utensils were rough and ready, suitable for being carried on pack-horses from one manor house to another, when the lord travelled.

The walls of the hall would often in this period be of rough wood. In later centuries, when the hall and other parts of the manor house would be rebuilt in stone, the walls would be plastered and in many places covered with frescoes. Beneath the solar, and perhaps partly under the hall, would be great cellars, where the store of provisions gained from the manor lands or bought at the fairs would be stored for the winter.

The great hall, solar and cellar are constant features of manor houses everywhere. Many manor houses would have other buildings in the form of lean-to sheds added from time to time around a courtyard. Thus most would have stables, a kitchen, where the beast was killed as well as cooked, a brewery, and sometimes a chapel. The whole would be to some extent fortified—not, of course, with a view to serious warfare, but as a protection against the sudden attack of some personal enemy or of robbers or wild beasts. The fortification might consist of a strong palisaded hedge or sometimes of a moat.

(*c*) The standard of comfort for everyone in this age was bound to be very low owing to the inefficiency of agriculture. In Western Europe, then as now, the price of all other commodities depends very largely on the price of wheat. Whereas, now, a well-tilled field will

yield twenty grains of wheat for every grain sown, in those days five grains was considered an exceptionally good return. Moreover, the actual time and labour required to produce a given quantity of wheat in the Middle Ages would be at least twenty times what it is in these days of scientific agriculture and labour-saving machinery. The margin left for luxuries, after the necessities of life had been satisfied by the produce of the soil, was, therefore, a perilously small one. It is for this reason that fine clothing and most manufactured goods, and goods carried from a distance, were sold at a price that was prohibitive except to the richest in the land. This explains, what so often strikes the reader of medieval history as so curious, how the tastes of a king and his family for a few luxuries and a few fine dresses, could impoverish the whole kingdom. It gives a new significance to the outcries against extravagance that broke out under such kings as Rufus or Edward II. Even such a piece of extravagance as staying up after dark and reading or revelling by artificial light was beyond the means of all but the very richest, except for a few great occasions in the year. It is for this reason that medieval man's day began with the light of dawn and ended with nightfall.

(*d*) Perhaps the most noticeable thing about the manor in contrast with the modern village is the absence of the tenant farmer. All the inhabitants of the manor had their number of half-acre strips in the common field and cultivated them in common, a plough and eight oxen, such as was generally used, being beyond the resources of the average villager. Some inhabitants of a manor would be freemen, especially in the eastern counties, but degrees of freedom and servitude were infinitely varied.

It must have been very difficult in many particular instances to say whether a man was bond or free, and it is generally supposed that the Norman lawyers tended to make doubtful cases unfree, thus lowering the status of great numbers of villagers. As a rule, however, if a man paid a rent in labour and kind, if he was free to sell his rights and to leave the village ; if he was free to marry his daughter or to send his son to work outside the manor without paying a fine ; then, he was a freeman. If he could not do these things, then he was not free. The villein would normally have a virgate, *i.e.* about thirty acres of land, and in return would work a certain number of days on his lord's demesne, put in some extra days' work in harvest and pay a rent in kind—very often in poultry or eggs at some great festival of the Church. Others would hold half a virgate, others a quarter, and would usually do proportionately less service. Others, who were known as ' bordars ' or ' cottars,' would have only their cottage and croft and hold no strips on the common field. These would owe very little labour dues, and would supplement the produce of their croft by earnings as hired labourers. They had this advantage over the more prosperous villein class, viz. that their services being of little value to their lord they could easily purchase their freedom if ever they desired to leave the manor.

The term ' unfree ' is apt to be misleading to the Twentieth Century reader. It is important to notice that the villein or cottar of the Norman period was in many ways in a better position than his descendant, the modern agricultural labourer. He was undoubtedly better fed in good seasons. His wage in land and kind would buy more meat and eggs. His standard of

comfort, which seems to us so miserably low, is not really so when judged by the only fair criterion—the standard of the age in which he lived. Moreover, he had very definite rights. Unlike his modern descendant he was not liable to lose his cottage and his livelihood at a week's notice at the caprice of his employer. His land was his own, in practice, at any rate, though not in legal fiction—and passed on to his children for ever. He had rights in the great tract of meadow land to pasture his flocks and herds, and in the woodlands to gather sticks and feed his swine. So long as he paid his customary dues his lord could not, in practice, interfere with him. The force of custom was so strong—as in all primitive societies—that a right once gained was rarely lost. Moreover, the villein was a member of a self-governing community. In the court of the manor justice was administered and the affairs of the manor arranged according to the voice of all the inhabitants. The time was not yet when lack of freedom became a galling disadvantage, and free men could compete in the labour market while the unfree had to work on the old terms.

(*e*) The situation of the populous areas of the country presents another striking contrast. It is a commonplace in English history that the country is cut in two over any burning question by a line going in a north-easterly direction from say Bristol to Hull. This line has been to some extent the division between York and Lancaster, Roundhead and Royalist, Conservative and Liberal. To-day all the great centres of industry and population, with the exception of London, are north-west of this line. In the days of the Normans and, indeed, until the time of the Industrial Revolution, the population, wealth and culture of the country preponderated

enormously on the south-east side of the line. South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire were the most thinly populated districts of the kingdom—containing more than 1000 acres per head of the population. The most populous and wealthiest counties were Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Middlesex, Kent and Oxfordshire. England was, in fact, like a recently occupied colony. Its coasts which faced the immigrating countries were populous ; but the interior, sparse.

(*f*) The situation of population leads us to consider, in passing, the appearance of the country. The modern countryside with its neatly divided fields and pasture lands was almost unknown except in specially favoured and populous districts. A very large portion of the country was forest or fen. To-day more than 12,000,000 acres are under cultivation in England. Then, it is estimated that the cultivated area was less than 5,000,000 acres. The greater part of Sussex, together with considerable portions of Hampshire, Surrey and Kent, was covered with the great forest—the Andredsweald, famous later for its iron smelting, Sherwood and Charnwood, the Forest of Dean, the Forest of Arden, Shotover, Epping and many others are the faint survivals of impassable forests that at this time covered many thousands of square miles. A large part of the counties of Lincoln, Bedford and Cambridge were an undrained fen till 1634, and there were many smaller fens in Somersetshire and other parts of the kingdom. Curiously enough in this land of forests and fens the roads are said to have been better than at any subsequent time prior to the Eighteenth Century. The traffic of Anglo-Saxon times was so small that the fine old Roman roads had not yet been worn out. The long journeys, which large

Diagram based on the
Domesday and Other Surveys
to show the
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION
at the time of the Norman Conquest
Each dot represents approximately 1000 Inhabitants

Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

numbers of people were in the habit of making to fairs and markets are surprising in view of the great difficulties of travelling in more recent and more civilised times.

(*g*) The last great contrast is the amazing disunion of the kingdom in the Eleventh Century. In modern times Englishmen all over the country show a remarkable similarity of thought, language and education. In 1066 there was no English nation. The man of Cornwall and the man of Yorkshire had less in common, except that they owned the same overlord, than a modern Frenchman and a modern Belgian. A century after the Conquest a document known as 'the Laws of Henry I.' speaks of three divisions of England, Wessex, Mercia and the Danelaw—each with its own special kind of customary law. In addition to these three divisions Northumbria was hardly reckoned as part of England at all. The Celtic inhabitants of Wales and Cornwall were entirely different in language, culture and traditions from the Teutonic holders of the middle and east of the land. Moreover the Welsh Marches continued till the end of the Middle Ages a region *sui generis*. The differences between Wessex and the Danelaw were very striking. For instance in the Danelaw the customary law was Scandinavian. In Wessex it was Saxon. In the Wessex Hundred Court the whole body of suitors declared the sentence. In the Danelaw there was the special 'law-man,' whose function it was to declare the customary law of his race. In the same way the languages of Wessex and the Danelaw differed sufficiently for the inhabitants of the one district to be unintelligible to those of the other. All this is important as an explanation of the fact that the inhabitants of various districts of Eleventh Century England were more hostile to one

another than they were to a common enemy from across the sea. As we consider all these local differences, together with that characteristic sluggishness of the Anglo-Saxon race that always demoralised it in days of ease and prosperity, it is difficult to see what else but ' the blood and iron ' of the Norman Conquest could have saved it from developing into a group of petty principalities, like Germany in the Eighteenth Century.

§ 2. It now remains to consider, as briefly as may be, the nature of this potent unifying engine, the Norman Conquest. The gentle, white-haired old Saint Edward had died without children (Jan. 5, 1066). His nearest heir in blood was Edgar Aetheling. But as the Victorian historians, in their anxiety to find all modern developments among the Teutonic tribes, have so often impressed upon us, the crown did not always go by strictly hereditary right. So the child Edgar was passed over. The claimant on the spot was Harold, son of the greatest noble in Wessex. He had no blood relation with the West-Saxon kings ; but a very slight one with the House of Knut. He was thus in grave danger of falling between two stools as he relied on the support of the West Saxons and derived all his claims from the Danes. However, he managed to establish himself as king and confidently awaited—like the great warrior that he was—the attacks of his two mighty rivals. The first to arrive was his gigantic namesake Harold Hardrada of Norway, so famous in song—the hero of many a breathless deed of arms in many lands from the Greek Empire to the Arctic Circle. Flushed with his victory over the Northern Earls, Edwin and Morcar, Harold Hardrada met Harold of England at Stamford Bridge in one of the mightiest and hardest hand-to-hand fights in history ; at last the

English won and Hardrada's body was given the seven foot of earth that Harold had promised him before the battle. This was on Sept. 25. Three days later Harold's other and still more formidable rival, William of Normandy, landed at Pevensey in Sussex.

William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy, needs to be considered at greater length, as he is one of the few men whose personal character has left a permanent impression on our history. The Normans were at this time the leading race in Europe. They had been Danish pirates a century and a half before and had settled down in Northern France at the invitation of one of the decadent successors of Charlemagne. They soon forgot their origin and became more French than the French themselves, and wherever they went showed a supreme genius for organisation, government, war and for assimilating the civilisation and ideals of the more settled races of Europe. They were the most religious race and the greatest warriors in Europe. They were also the staunchest supporters of the great reforming popes. In fact the history of Europe in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries might well be described as the period of the ascendancy of the Normans. William, himself, was a tall strong man in his thirty-ninth year when he landed to fight for the throne. He was the descendant of a long line of Norman Dukes, and his father was the eccentric Duke Robert, surnamed by some 'the devil' and by others 'the magnificent.' This Robert fell in love with a poor tanner's daughter at Falaise named Harlotta, whom he saw washing clothes in a brook; and by her was born to him the Conqueror. Robert never took the trouble to marry Harlotta, and died leaving William a child of six. William was hated and despised by the

proud Norman barons, not so much because of his illegitimate birth—that was a small matter, the marriage tie was very loose among them—as because of his mother's low origin. William seemed fated from the day of his birth to rouse men's lifelong jealousy and hatred, and by the sheer force of his indomitable will to rise triumphantly over them all. When no older than many a modern schoolboy in the fifth form he bent the proud Norman nobles to obedience. Then he forced the King of France to sue for peace, and then conquered Maine and Anjou. The conquest of England was the crowning achievement of a brilliant career.

The force with which he invaded England has been aptly compared to a modern joint-stock company. He sent what would now be called a prospectus to the fighting men and great feudatories of Western Europe, setting forth his claim to the English throne and offering those who would help him a share in the conquest proportionate to the men and ships contributed to the enterprise. Thus, the host that he led to England was not Norman, except in leadership and organisation, but a mixed force of Flemings and Bretons and of almost every race in Western Europe. The Bayeux Tapestry which formerly surrounded the nave of Bayeux Cathedral gives crude but vivid pictures of the immense preparations in the way of shipbuilding that went on during the summer of 1066. This tapestry was probably made at the request of Odo of Bayeux by the ladies of the Conqueror's family. For tapestry making was then one of the chief occupations of ladies of quality. It records the events leading up to the conquest of England and the Battle of Hastings. As there will be occasion to refer to it later we remark, in passing, that it is one of the most

important documents we have for the events now under consideration.

Harold, on his part, made the most thorough preparations to resist his formidable rival, and one cannot help feeling, as the Saxon chroniclers felt, that but for a long series of events which no human foresight could have averted, Harold would have been successful. He had kept a large force on foot during the summer ready at a moment's notice to set out for any part of the coast that might be threatened. In addition to this he had had a considerable fleet patrolling the south coast. But as the Summer wore on to Autumn he became increasingly of opinion that William would put off his attempt till the new year. His fleet went to London to refit. He and his forces were drawn off to the battle in the North at Stamford Bridge, where they were badly battered, and then all unexpectedly William landed and began to ravage with fire and sword the villages of Sussex. Harold hurried south with a few thousand 'huscarles,' the trained regular troops who formed the nucleus of a standing army. William's clear policy was to force on a battle. His army could soon have been worn down by want of supplies had Harold adopted Fabian tactics, wasting the country and cutting off stragglers. A comparatively small force—estimated at less than 14,000, as William's army was—could not have existed long in the midst of a hostile population, unless it won a decisive victory. Harold seems to have known this, but was distressed at the fearful atrocities of the Normans on the villages of the South, and felt that it was his duty to fight at once, relying on his 'huscarles' and the hastily raised levies of Wessex.

The Battle of Senlac was almost a foregone conclusion,

The sluggishness and insensate conservatism of the Anglo-Saxon race is terribly illustrated by the fact that they were two hundred years behind the times. They had no cavalry and no archers of any importance. Thus they had no means of offensive warfare. Harold made the best of a bad job by drawing up his forces on

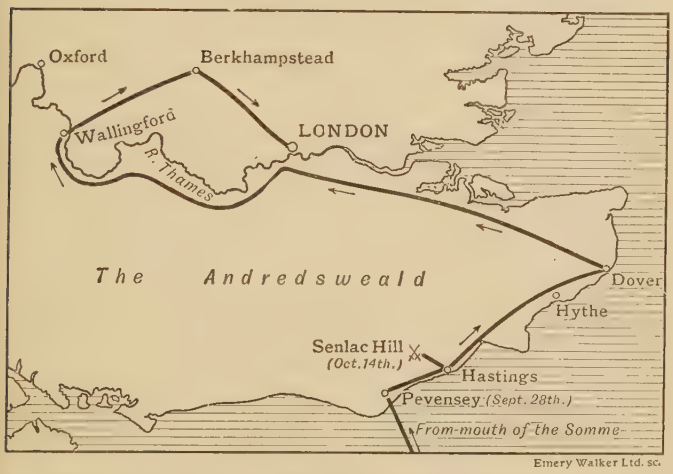

Diagram to illustrate William the Conqueror's campaign of 1066.

the hill of Senlac behind stout palisades, his 'huscarles' in the centre and the ill-armed, ill-trained country folk on the flanks. The utmost he could hope was to wear his enemies down and demoralise them by beating off repeated attacks. The fact that the fight lasted so long is a remarkable evidence of the doggedness and natural fighting capacity of the levies of Wessex. In Edward the Confessor's time, when the Normans were subjecting England to a process of peaceful penetration, Ralph, the Confessor's Norman Earl of Hereford, tried to teach his

Saxon thegns how to fight on horseback, but they mutinied, and he had to desist. Now this insular prejudice was to cost them dear. A successful ruse drew the Saxon levies from outside their fortifications, and they were quickly ridden down by the heavily armed Norman countrymen. The arrows of the Norman archers, fired so as to drop on the heads of their opponents, did the rest, and the 'huscarles' fought to the last man around the body of their fallen king.

The victory of Senlac proved once for all that heavily armed horsemen could bear down and destroy almost any number of footmen. This state of things continued till the Fourteenth Century, and had most important social results. Political power usually belongs to that class that would prevail in case of civil war. It now belonged, therefore, to a small body of heavily armoured cavalry, who soon held most of the land in the country, and could easily keep the rest of the inhabitants in subjection. The unquestioned preponderance of this small body of cavalrymen is illustrated in a remarkable way by the fact that the country was thrown in confusion by dissensions amongst the nobles themselves and not by risings of the common people. It was three centuries later, when infantry and the long bow had proved themselves the decisive factor in battle, that political power began to pass again from the noble to the common people.

It is characteristic of the religious instincts of the Normans that Battle Abbey rose on the piece of ground where Harold's huscarles made their last stand. After the battle William went on to subdue the Cinque Ports so as to keep open his line of communications. He then skirted the great forest of the Andredsweald on the western side, and continuing his journey northward

swooped downward on London from the North and thus cut off from the Londoners all hope of effective help from the northern levies of Edwin and Morcar, who—whether by design or accident, no one knows—failed to support Harold in his last fight. In London he was elected king by the Witan, who could not help themselves, and crowned and anointed king in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066.

So far William was only in possession of a small part of England. He had many armed expeditions to make westward, northward and north-westward before the resistance of the country was put down, and finally he had to resort to that fearful 'harrying of the north,' which left no living creature between York and Durham, and caused a region of desolate waste to remain for centuries in the north as a terrible memorial of the Norman Conquest. However, the Battle of Senlac had so far broken the back of English resistance that William was able to spend the whole of the year 1067 in Normandy, leaving the war to his lieutenants; and when Hereward the Wake surrendered in the Isle of Ely in 1071, the resistance of the great mass of the people was for ever at an end. The speed and thoroughness of the Norman Conquest is not to be attributed to mere brute force. We have already alluded to the peaceful penetration of England that went on steadily during the reign of Edward the Confessor. William was not without supporters in England; and it is a great mistake to regard him as more of a foreigner than many other princes who had ruled in England. To do so is to import into the Eleventh Century ideas of nationality that had little existence till two centuries later. A man of York was as much a foreigner to a man of Winchester as a man of

Rouen. Moreover, William had many arguments in support of his claims. The Bayeux Tapestry portrays with much vividness and detail Harold, wrecked off the coast of Normandy years before, and swearing a solemn oath on the book of the Gospels, and on a chest in which, unknown to him, sacred relics were concealed, that he would not oppose William in his quest of the throne of England. The English chroniclers make no allusion to such an incident; but in that age the suspicion that Harold was forsworn—and to be forsworn varied in gravity according to the sacredness of the relics on which the oath was sworn—must have unnerved many of his supporters. In addition to this William could claim that, as is suggested in the Bayeux Tapestry, Edward the Confessor had left him the throne. Questions of constitutional theory that might have interested Sir Edward Coke in the Seventeenth Century were not much debated in the Eleventh, and so the question, what right had the sainted monarch to leave his crown to another, would hardly arise. We must remember too that the Norman Invasion was a crusade—blessed by the Pope, headed by a sacred banner, the gift of the Pope—in the cause of Church reform, and so had the support of some few of the most enlightened Englishmen of the age. William gained the support of larger numbers by preserving their old laws and customs: we find Englishmen in his army as early as 1068; and, in spite of much in his favour, it is a remarkable tribute to his political ability that he was able to establish himself as a national king. He succeeded in doing what most of the world's greatest conquerors—Alexander and Napoleon—utterly failed to do.

§ 3. (*a*) There is no need to occupy ourselves with the

manifold military expeditions by which the country was subdued during the five years that succeeded the battle of Hastings. But it is important to notice the general methods, as some of the results of these methods are still with us after the lapse of more than nine centuries. Whenever a district submitted, a force was settled in some advantageous position, which was made secure by the erection of a castle. To most people the mention of a Norman castle suggests an image of massive walls and lofty towers with their battlements lost in the clouds. Such an impression is quite erroneous. The early Norman castle consisted simply of a tower called the keep, built upon a mound—natural or artificial—and surrounded by a palisaded court called the bailey. There has been much controversy as to the material of which these early fortresses were built. Many scholars maintain that they were wooden structures, and that stone castles were a later development and rare until the time of Stephen. In support of this they have a formidable array of arguments. Thus it is contended that stone castles were unusual even in France in 1066. The Bayeux Tapestry depicting a campaign in Brittany shows castle walls set on fire with torches, and flaming in a manner anything but suggestive of solid stone. It is also significant that immense numbers of castles are recorded to have been thrown up in a very short time. William stays a few days in a district and leaves behind him—apparently—a completed castle. A stone castle of any size would have taken months or years to construct with the primitive engineering devices of the age. Still stronger is the argument that most keeps were built on artificial mounds. It is impossible to erect a stone building on such a mound without giving the ground time to

settle. Land heaped up is inclined to slip, as the railway builders of the last century knew only too well. Such are the chief arguments of the wooden-castle champions. Their adversaries reply that some of the Conqueror's castles are definitely said to have been built of stone, among these are, especially, the Tower of London, and the Castles of Rochester and of York. Furthermore, in the reign of Rufus we have accounts of long sieges of the castles of turbulent barons: how could a wooden structure hold out for months against great royal armies? The conclusion of the matter seems to be that though stone castles were not unknown, the majority of William's first castles were wooden ones, and that bit by bit, as they settled down, the barons exchanged wood for stone. The art of fortress construction went on improving rapidly for three centuries, and by the reign of Edward III. outstripped the offensive arts to such an extent that only the development of firearms saved Europe from falling under the sway of tens of thousands of impregnable castles. But this is another story, which will concern us in connection with a later century.

(*b*) It is characteristic of medieval man, and especially of the Norman, that his fortress for the defence of his body was dwarfed into insignificance by comparison with the church and monastery that he built for his soul's health. The massive Norman church is the most abiding memorial, as it is the truest expression of the character of those Normans who followed William in his great enterprise. The Conquest was followed by an outburst of church-building activity that is without any parallel in all the history of the human race. In Modern England, with fifteen times the population, at least one-third of the churches were originally founded or rebuilt during

the century that followed the Conquest. During the Nineteenth Century, with all its engineering skill, only one great church has been built in England. During the Norman period some three hundred churches of roughly the same scale were built. It has been pointed out (*Encyclop. of Religion and Ethics*, p. 707a) also that the Norman churches in England were the largest of their time in Europe. In all the rest of Europe there were only built two churches—Spiers and Cluny—of over 50,000 sq. ft. floor area. In England there were four churches, S. Edmund's, Bury, S. Paul's, London, S. Swithun's, Winchester, and S. Albans, that exceeded even 60,000 sq. ft.

The expression Norman Architecture is apt to be misleading. It suggests that the Normans had some style of architecture peculiar to themselves. This is not so. Norman architecture is the same in its essential particulars as Saxon. Both, as we shall presently see, are but types of the style of architecture known as the Romanesque ; but the Normans, by the introduction of foreign craftsmen, gradually improved the technique and variety of the Saxon architecture, and built on an incomparably larger and more massive scale. None the less, architecture in England continued to preserve certain characteristic features inherited from pre-Conquest and indeed pre-Saxon times. Thus, for instance, English churches are much longer in proportion to their breadth than any others in the world. Large churches on the continent frequently have five or more aisles. English cathedrals hardly ever have more than three. Old S. Paul's was nearly double the length of Notre Dame. Again, the choirs of English churches are with rare exceptions rectangular : in continental churches there

is usually an apse. The continental cathedral is usually entered from the west : in England, perhaps owing to the bad weather, the western door is often absent, and entrance is made through a large porch on the southern side. The average English church is made distinctly cruciform by the very great projection of the transepts : in continental churches the transepts only project very slightly—if at all. Similarly the English west front is very much broader than the continental one, in proportion to the breadth of the nave. Thus, for instance, the west front of Bury S. Edmund's was 260 ft. broad, its nave being only 80 ft., while that of Notre Dame was only 155 ft., its nave being of the same breadth. Perhaps the most noticeable of all characteristics is the great central lantern tower, which served to throw light into the centre of the building, where the high altar was placed, and also to form a unifying central feature both within and without. The tower of Hereford Cathedral is a good typical example.

These features which we have enumerated are characteristic of English church architecture through all its styles from beginning to end. In them the Normans simply carried on the Saxon and pre-Saxon tradition. It remains to consider Anglo-Norman architecture in its relation to the styles that preceded and followed it. The essential difference between one style of architecture and another is the way in which the roof is supported.[1] The architecture of the ancients consisted essentially of two sideposts supporting a flat lintel. The magnificent temples of Ancient Greece are all of this type. But there was this difficulty which forced itself on architects

[1] See Lambourne's *Architecture in Oxford Stone*. (Oxford University Press.)

with increasing persistence as they attempted larger buildings. It was necessary for the lintel to be composed of a single slab of stone commensurate with the breadth of the building. By the beginning of the Christian era the quarries of the Roman Empire had been almost exhausted in the search for these immense slabs of stone. Then, in the Second Century A.D. some Roman architect invented the semicircular arch. This discovery revolutionised architecture. It was now possible to roof a space with small stones forming the barrel vault; and doorways and windows are no longer made simply of two sideposts and a lintel, but of two sideposts and a semicircular arch. When Imperial Rome crumbled away, its architecture was carried in a thousand modified and distorted shapes to every corner of Christendom—and beyond. These shapes are grouped together according to their essential feature—the Roman round arch—as the Romanesque style. Saxon and Norman architecture are both of them, as has been already remarked, variant types of this same Romanesque style.

Early Anglo-Norman architecture did not much surpass the Saxon in technique. The pillars and walls were very low and immensely thick. In spite of their thickness the walls were not strong, and little attempt was made to strengthen them in places which bore the greatest strain. Hence we have record of many great towers falling down not long after they were finished, like the tower of Winchester Cathedral, which came crashing down as though in protest against the burial of the infamous Rufus under the floor beneath.

The windows were mostly of a single light. The arches were not recessed at all, or only once, and their edges were either square or have a plain round moulding

cut into them. The zig-zag ornament so common later is only occasionally found. The dripstone, or projecting moulding over a door or window arch to throw off the wet, is sometimes ornamented with what is called 'hatched' moulding. The head of the door is generally square with a round arch over it, and the intermediate space under the arch, called the tympanum, is either left plain or ornamented with shallow sculpture. Early Norman sculpture can be distinguished from later Twelfth-Century Norman, not only because it is so much plainer, ruder and shallower, but because it was done with an axe, the chisel not being used till the latter years of Henry I.'s reign. Early Norman walls, like the Saxon, are very wide-jointed—that is they are built of small stones or rubble, and a very large quantity of mortar separates one stone from another. The single remaining tower of Oxford Castle or the tower of S. Michael's in the same city are good examples of this wide-jointed early Norman work.

As the Twelfth Century advances Norman architecture makes rapid strides. The walls and pillars become higher and somewhat more slender, flat buttresses being used at points of especial strain. The doors and windows are deeply recessed and covered with a profusion of ornament, like the west doorway of Iffley Church, which was built about 1160. The ornaments are deeply cut with a chisel, and consist chiefly of the zig-zag, the beak, the Signs of the Zodiac, the hatched, the billet and the scollop. The masonry of the walls becomes short-jointed, that is the blocks of stone are carefully cut to fit one another and the space for mortar reduced to a minimum. This change seems to have set in with the famous Roger of Salisbury's churches at Salisbury and Malmsbury, erected between 1115 and 1139. William of Malmsbury,

Norman doorway of S. Bees Church, Cumberland, probably built about 1130 A.D.

speaking of these, says: "There he erected extensive edifices at vast cost and of surpassing beauty, the courses of the stone being so correctly laid that the joint deceives the eye, and leads it to imagine that the whole wall is composed of a single block." In many churches it is still possible to distinguish the original part of the early Norman wall from later Norman additions by the width of the joints of masonry. On the whole the appearances of a late Norman church of the middle of the Twelfth Century was very gorgeous, but with rather a barbaric splendour in contrast with the delicacy of style of the Early English architecture that was shortly to supersede it.

The remains of medieval architecture are more fascinating than any other—partly from their intrinsic beauty and variety of design—partly because medieval man expressed himself in stone as really and, perhaps, as adequately as men of other ages have striven to do in their writings. There is also yet a further interest that should not be forgotten. The buildings of the ancient world, like those of to-day, were planned to the most minute details by the architect. They were built by slaves, whose responsibility, like that of the wage slaves of to-day, extended no further than carrying out exactly the directions of the architect. In the Middle Ages, on the contrary, the architect only indicated in a very approximate way the plan to be carried out. The details were left to the individual workman, and so every workman was an artist. In every grinning gargoyle or corbel or carved capital he was expressing the beauty or the terror or the wonder of the Catholic faith. As we look into the details of a medieval church we see recorded in stone the thoughts and aspirations of

hundreds of workmen artists, whose names are forgotten, whose bodies have been dust for centuries, but who worked for the glory of God and spent as much time and thought on the ornaments of hidden parts of the building, which no human eye might ever see, as upon the windows and doorways of the west front.

§ 4. (*a*) It is impossible to conclude a chapter on the Norman Conquest without some reference to feudalism. For ages children have been taught at school that William the Conqueror introduced feudalism into England. This statement needs a great deal of examination. The word ' feudalism ' has come to be used very vaguely in common speech. Social reformers in highly coloured perorations often talk of ' breaking the shackles of feudalism ' or stigmatise some institution they have marked out for destruction as ' a relic of feudalism.' So that to the proverbial man in the street the word ' feudalism ' is full of mysterious terror. It has come to connote anything old and disagreeable that has a connection—however remote—with the Middle Ages—anything, in fact, which ought to be abolished. Now feudalism, in the proper sense of the term, has a very definite meaning. It is a system of land tenure. B holds land of A and gives in return military and other service. C holds some of the land which B holds of A on condition of military and other service to B, and so on for any number of gradations. William the Conqueror did not introduce this system into England. It had been growing up gradually for centuries. In the troublous times of the Danish Invasions, and afterwards, law and order were so weak that it was difficult for a small landowner to stand alone. There was constant danger of a more powerful neighbour's taking his possessions by force and leaving

him with little chance of redress. So the small landowner in England did very much what small landowners all over Europe were doing in the Dark Ages. He went to one of his most powerful neighbours and ' commended ' himself to him. That is to say, he handed over his land to the powerful neighbour and received it back, holding it henceforth as a tenant, and recognising this neighbour as his lord. He would henceforth fight for his lord and do him various other services, and his lord in return would protect him and safeguard his interests to the utmost of his power. This sort of thing had been going on for centuries before the Conquest. But it was not universal. Now most traditions have at least a grain of truth in them, and the grain of truth in the tradition that William introduced feudalism is this. William made the feudal system of universal application to all the land in England, whether the original owners had ever commended themselves or not. Also, he definitely formulated a legal theory of feudalism, which still exists in English law. That is the reason why a man making his will can ' bequeath ' his personal property, but can only ' devise ' his land. That, too, is the reason why the eldest son of an intestate inherits all his land, but only shares his personal property with his younger brothers and sisters. In legal theory, inherited from the Conquest, the king is the only landowner in England to-day : those commonly called landowners are strictly speaking only landholders—tenants, that is, of H.M. George V.

Henceforth all the land in England is regarded as belonging to the king. He allots it in various amounts to his nobles and those who had helped him with men and money in his expedition. They are henceforth tenants-in-chief, holding their lands of the king on conditions of

feudal tenure. These conditions were complicated in the extreme—especially in these early times—but their broad principles can easily be summarised as follows. First, come the liabilities of the king as lord paramount at the apex of the feudal pyramid. He had to protect his vassals in their rights, and to some undefined extent was under the obligation of acting according to the advice of his tenants-in-chief. In this latter liability we have the germ of the House of Lords, and indeed of Parliamentary Government, though in England the King's Council never altogether lost the character of the Anglo-Saxon Witan or assembly of wise men, who are chosen for their wisdom rather than for their tenancy-in-chief.

Next, come the liabilities of the tenant-in-chief. He owes in return for his land military service for forty days in the year, at his own cost providing a number of knights proportionate to the size of his estate. In addition to this he had to pay various feudal dues on certain occasions. When the king's eldest son was knighted he had to pay a contribution towards the festivities, or when the king's eldest daughter was married he had to contribute in the same way towards the dowry. Also, if the king were taken prisoner, as happened later on in the case of Richard I., the tenants-in-chief were in duty bound to contribute together to pay his ransom. These aids, as the contributions for these three purposes were called, were at first quite indefinite in extent, but gradually became fixed by custom. The contribution towards a ransom could not of course be fixed in amount, but only in proportion. A tenant-in-chief had really only a life interest in his estate; he could not at first leave it by will to whom he would. When he died his eldest son inherited it and had to pay a 'relief'—

usually about a year's rent—on entering upon his father's possessions. This was the medieval equivalent of death-duties. If the tenant-in-chief died without heirs his estate escheated to the king, that is to say, it reverted to the royal demesne whence it came. Thus the royal lands were constantly being increased, but just as constantly diminished as fresh grants were made to faithful ministers or favourite courtiers. If the tenant-in-chief died leaving only a daughter, the estate went to the husband whom the daughter married, as a married woman could hold no property till the sixties of the last century. Everything she had went to her husband. The husband took upon himself the discharge of the duties attached to the estate, and so the king not unnaturally claimed to have a say in the choice of a husband for the heiress of a great territorial magnate. This was originally merely a power of veto to prevent the heiress marrying one of the king's enemies. But the king very soon got the right of choosing a husband for the heiress. She was then under an obligation to marry the man chosen or else to pay a large fine to the royal exchequer. We find later on that the less scrupulous kings took advantage of this right, and by naming a long series of very undesirable husbands were often able to obtain large sums of money from the unfortunate heiress. One of the commonest ways of rewarding royal favourites was the gift of a wealthy heiress in marriage.

The tenants-in-chief had the right to let their lands to sub-tenants and to exact in their turn from their tenants practically every right that the king could exact from themselves. The sub-tenants in turn had similar rights over their tenants, and so on *ad infinitum*. To the medieval mind the entire structure of society turned on

land tenure, a man's social position and rights depended upon his tenure of land. It seemed almost impossible to imagine a man at all apart from the land which he held and the conditions on which he held it. The present day with its vast population of wage-earners, who have no connection with the land of the country in which they live, would be almost unthinkable to Eleventh Century man. Feudalism dominated almost every province of human thought. Medieval theology, for instance, could only conceive God as a great feudal overlord from whom his creatures held their possessions by feudal tenure.

In spite of the opprobrium that has come to be attached to the term in these days, feudalism stands for a grand ideal in the relations between man and man. The Nineteenth Century capitalist talked of employing so many 'hands' in his works. The only relation between him and them was what Carlyle called 'the cash nexus.' The capitalist employed them because, and so long as, it paid him to do so. The workman worked for the capitalist for the same reason. There was no human relation between them. Feudalism, on the contrary, stands for the ideal of personal love and loyalty. The tenant did homage to his overlord, knelt before him with sword belt unloosed, and took the oath of allegiance. Henceforth he was his 'man.' Lord and tenant were bound together for life by the bond of mutual love and loyalty, and the same tie descended to their children. In the Middle Ages a man was a man of flesh and blood. There was a human tie between the poorest tenant and his lord. Men did not cease to be men and become the mere 'hands' of the capitalist—to be scrapped like obsolete machinery when too old to work—till long after the decay of feudalism.

(*b*) Moreover, the feudal state in England never, except for a short time under Stephen, became disintegrated into a mere collection of petty independent principalities under the shadowy suzerainty of a king, as happened in the greater part of Western Europe. It is very important to realise that England, since 1066, has been one state under a strong central government, such as France did not become even at the end of the Middle Ages. This fact is responsible for many permanent features of modern English life, and it is due in no small measure to the statesmanship of William the Conqueror. The methods by which he checked the worst evils of feudalism are worth examining.

In the first place, he scattered the estates of the great nobles in such a way as to make it almost impossible for one of them to consolidate his power in any one district. It is quite obvious that a noble who had a few manors in, say, Yorkshire, a few more in Kent and some more in Cornwall, could not in those days of slow travelling oppose the crown with a strength at all proportionate to the extent of his possessions. It is quite possible that this scattering of estates was done by accident as much as by design. We have seen that the country was conquered piecemeal, and when a district submitted it would quite naturally be divided in such a way that nearly all the nobles received a share. But historians are fond of trying to see the personal factor of the will of a great man in events of great moment. Moreover, a careful study of local history makes it probable that the Conqueror was in the habit of arranging the distribution of estates so that two or more personal enemies should hold neighbouring lands and so neutralise one another's power.

However this may be, William's greatest instrument

for preventing feudal disintegration was the sheriff. In every county the sheriff held in his hands all the threads of government. He led the military forces of the shire to battle. He presided as judge at the shire court. He administered the law and he collected the taxes. He was the local man-of-all-works of the Norman kings. Now, the sheriffs on the Continent were often responsible to the local great noble, or the great nobles themselves might be sheriffs, or the sheriffs might become great nobles and hereditary viscounts. William and his successors took good care that this should not be so in England. The sheriff in every county was responsible to the king alone, he was generally one of the lesser nobility who composed the civil service—much too weak to be dangerous. He was frequently superseded, and not, as a rule, allowed to pass on his office to his son. The king had to be on the alert to prevent this, for offices in the Middle Ages constantly tended to become hereditary. Later kings, as we shall see, sent round itinerant justices partly with the purpose of keeping the sheriff's nose to the grindstone. But as a rule the king had in the sheriff of every county a faithful servant, sufficiently strong in the power delegated to him to counterbalance the great noble of the district. The only exceptions to this rule were the great Palatine Earldoms. Two of these, Shrewsbury and Chester, were erected on the Welsh Border, and one, Durham, was created to watch the Scots. A fourth Palatine Earldom, Kent, was entrusted to Odo of Bayeux for the repression of pirates in the Channel, but was quickly extinguished. The Palatine Earls were virtually independent monarchs, but for the theoretical suzerainty of the king. They had their own sheriffs, coined their own money and held

courts which were miniature models of the king's court. The king's writ did not run in Durham as late as the beginning of the last century.

There remains to be noticed a third and somewhat obscure way in which William sought to repress the independence of his nobles. This was the famous gathering at Salisbury in 1086. There is much difference of opinion as to whom exactly William gathered to Salisbury. But it seems most probable that it was the feudal sub-tenants, who there took an oath of allegiance directly to the king. Every tenant took an oath of allegiance to his immediate overlord, and there was a real danger, in case of a baronial rebellion, of a feudal sub-tenant's considering this oath to his immediate overlord more binding than his allegiance to the king. The object of the gathering at Salisbury seems to have been to make the bond of allegiance between all feudal tenants and the king stronger than the bond between sub-tenant and overlord.

In the annals of the world there are many long periods of comparative quiescence. The ends of these periods show little advance on their beginnings. There are other periods short but rapid in their progress and decay, periods in which the slow tendencies of long ages are suddenly given a powerful impetus and pushed suddenly to their logical conclusion. These are the periods that are important historically. Such a period in the history of Europe was the Reformation, or the French Revolution, or the Great War of the Twentieth Century. Such a period for England was the so-called Norman Conquest. It has left a stamp on English political evolution and on the face of England itself that the hand of time has so far been unable to efface. It is the end of one very long chapter in our history and the beginning of another.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE BARONS AND THE MONARCHY GAVE BIRTH TO POPULAR INSTITUTIONS

§ 1. The origin of trial by jury.
  (*a*) The attempts of the barons to gain local independence.
  (*b*) Their final defeat by Henry II.
  (*c*) The development of the jury system.

§ 2. The origin of Parliamentary government.
  (*a*) The barons try to usurp the central government.
  (*b*) The true nature of Magna Carta.
  (*c*) The development of the Great Council into the Houses of Parliament.

§ 1. The history of England after the Norman Conquest may be regarded as a four centuries' struggle between the monarchy and the nobles, ending finally in the complete supremacy of the monarchy under Edward IV. and the House of Tudor. During the course of the struggle it was the policy of the crown to strengthen popular institutions and to ally with the mass of the people against their baronial oppressors. This alliance of the monarchy and the people led to two great popular institutions—trial by jury and representative government in Parliament—which in England survived the monarchical despotism of the House of Tudor, and afterwards spread from this country to almost every state in the civilised world.

(*a*) To trace the origin of these institutions, then, it is necessary to follow certain essential features of the great struggle. From the Norman Conquest till the end of the Twelfth Century, it was the aim of the barons to divide the country among themselves, each baron being supreme monarch in his own district and only owning a rather shadowy allegiance to a king in London. They strove, in short, for the local independence that they had known in France; where the king was far less powerful than many of his great barons, over whom he was nominal suzerain. This struggle continued till the mighty system of institutions erected by Henry II. made further struggle futile, and the aims of the barons underwent a change. Under William Rufus (1087-1100) the nobles at the beginning of his reign took advantage of the fact that Robert, Duke of Normandy, was the eldest son of the Conqueror to raise a rebellion; and again in 1094, the powerful Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, made war, but Rufus, dissolute and extortionate though he was, had no difficulty in raising up the national levies in the 'fyrd,' as the people preferred to be ruled by one tyrant in London rather than by hundreds of tyrants in castles on every point of vantage. Strong in their support, he used Ranulf Flambard to extort the uttermost farthing of feudal incidents from his barons. When Rufus fell wounded to death by the mysterious arrow in the New Forest (August 2, 1100), his youngest brother Henry Beauclerk, being on the spot, seized the royal treasure at Winchester and became king. Again the barons strove to take advantage of the fact that his eldest brother Robert was rightful king in order to gain local independence. Henry relied still more on the help of the people. When Robert of Belesme defied him from his

strong castles in 1102, the national levies followed Henry with the utmost enthusiasm till the fierce tyrant had been driven out of the kingdom. Henry then proceeded, strong in the support of the people, to invade Normandy where his elder brother Robert was a constant source of insecurity to his throne. The barons were ceaselessly plotting in his favour as he was known to be a ruler after their own heart, who would allow plenty of local independence. Robert was defeated and captured at Tinchebrai (Sept. 28, 1106), a battle between English and Normans which was regarded as reversing Hastings. He died after twenty-eight years' imprisonment in Cardiff Castle. Robert's son, William Clito, struggled on for more than twenty years with the help of various Continental enemies of Henry, but failed utterly and died in 1128.

The strength of Henry's position lay in the measures which he took to gain the support of the mass of the people. He married Matilda, the niece of Edgar Atheling, of the ancient royal House of Wessex, and did everything in his power to be an Englishman—to the disgust and scorn of his nobles. Again, he did everything in his power to foster the prosperity of the trading classes in order that they might become a more effective counterpoise to the nobles. He granted Charters, as we shall see in a later chapter, to many towns. When a great inundation of the sea in Flanders had made many skilled artisans homeless, Henry settled them near Tenby in 1111. Flanders was at this time the great industrial district of Europe, and these Flemish settlers brought with them a knowledge of the arts of weaving and agriculture that greatly enriched one of the wildest and most remote regions of his kingdom.

Another method of weakening the great nobles was the formation of a new official nobility of Englishmen, and of Normans of lesser rank, who served him as ministers and sheriffs. These were strong enough, as representatives of the king, to keep the turbulent baronage in check ; but depending, as they did, entirely on the king, could not be a danger to him. It is noticeable that in the one surviving Pipe Roll of Henry I.'s reign not a single earl appears in a position of financial trust. The most famous of this new official nobility was the famous Roger of Salisbury and his family. The story of his origin is typical of Henry I.'s methods. Roger was originally priest of a small chapel near Caen in Normandy, and Henry, then only a prince, riding out from Caen on a hunting expedition turned aside to the chapel to hear mass. The shrewd priest guessing that the party were in a hurry to be gone, read the service with such speed that Henry declared him the very man to be his chaplain. He took him, then and there, into his service, and when Henry became king his rise was rapid. He became immensely wealthy, and founded a great family of clerical statesmen, who did much of the administrative work of the country during the next generation. They were great builders of castles as well as of churches. During the struggle between Stephen and Matilda, their weight, thrown suddenly into the opposite balance pan, was sufficient to decide for a time in favour of Matilda.

The most important of all Henry's methods of strengthening the monarchy against the barons was the reorganisation of the ancient Law Courts which had been tending to fall into disuse during the reign of the careless Rufus. The chief court of every county was the Shire Court, which was supposed to be held at least twice a year.

It was presided over by the sheriff, and every freeholder in the county was more or less bound to attend it. Here all the varied administrative work of the county was carried out and the more important civil and criminal cases of the county were tried. Henry, with the help of Roger of Salisbury, saw to it that these courts were properly held and sound justice administered. From time to time he sent round Justices on Eyre from his own court to visit the shire courts all over England. They were sent out chiefly to look after the king's revenue, but they were an important link between the central and local governments. They gradually came to interest themselves in the administration of justice—an important source of revenue —and are the forerunners of the present judges on circuit.

Below the Shire Court was the Court of the Hundred, a lesser division of the county and one of great antiquity, which has so far baffled all attempts to discover its origin. The Hundred Court was supposed to meet every month for civil and criminal trials. The feudal theory that any great tenant-in-chief had a right to hold a court and to administer justice to his tenants had caused a great many Hundred Courts to fall into private hands even before the Conquest; and the subsequent change of the national Hundred Courts into the feudal courts of great nobles had been a rapid one. Hundred Courts so converted were known as 'Court Leets,' which survived in a dwindling form till modern times. But even in the Court Leet the sheriff had had a right to preside twice a year and hold the court in its pre-feudal form. The Hundred Court so held was known as 'the Sheriff's Tourn,'[1] and was an important means of maintaining

[1] The first known allusion to the Sheriff's Tourn is probably in the Domesday entry about the city of Hereford, where it is

law and order. Henry did all that he could to maintain it everywhere, and to prevent Hundred Courts from falling, without any legal sanction, into private hands.

Lastly, at the head of all this system of courts, Henry organised a royal Court of Justice, the Curia Regis, in order to try cases in which he himself was concerned, and a Court of Exchequer to supervise the revenue. The courts gradually widened their sphere of influence and came to be a powerful bulwark against feudal anarchy.

It was not without reason that the peace which Henry imposed on the land caused him to be identified by his admiring people with the 'Lion of Justice' of Merlin's prophecy. If Henry had had a capable son to succeed him, no doubt the history of the Twelfth Century would have been one of continuous constitutional development. No wonder that Henry was so broken and cast down when he heard that his only legitimate son had been drowned in the White Ship (November 25, 1120). For a disputed succession would give the nobles the chance they sought of razing to the ground all the carefully built fabric of centralised government. He married again and hoped for a male heir; but in vain. Before he died he made a last despairing effort on behalf of the monarchy by making his barons swear to support his daughter Matilda. But no sooner was he dead than many of the barons lightly repudiated their oaths and clave to Stephen, the son of the Conqueror's daughter Adela. Thus began those nineteen melancholy years of anarchy, in which the nobles supported first Stephen

stated that the citizens who had horses "proceeded three times (not twice curiously enough) a year with the Sheriff to the pleas and to the hundred court at Wormelow" (*v.* the *Victoria County History of Hereford*, vol. i.).

then Matilda, changing sides continually and caring only to prolong a struggle which enabled them to achieve their own selfish purposes.

The real interest of the reign of Stephen is that it shows us the state of things which was the ideal of the feudal nobility. Each noble, like Geoffrey de Mandeville in the Eastern Counties, strove to carve out for himself a district in which he would reign supreme. If he had differences of any kind with a neighbouring noble they were not to be settled by a law court, but by private war. The baron was to be a real peer or equal of the king, and if the king displeased him he might throw off his allegiance and, after giving the proper notice, might make war on the king. The relations of Ralph, Earl of Chester, and Robert, Earl of Gloucester, with Stephen were those of independent sovereigns, making alliances and breaking them and declaring war. Stephen besieged Baldwin of Redvers in Exeter Castle soon after his accession ; and, when Baldwin's garrison surrendered, it was pleaded in their favour that they had only been faithful to their oath of allegiance to their overlord and had sworn no allegiance to the king. Stephen consequently allowed them to depart freely with all their possessions.

(*b*) The long nineteen years of anarchy were at last brought to an end when Stephen was succeeded by his enemy, Matilda's son, Henry II. in 1154. It was Henry, who during his reign of nearly thirty-five years, put an end for ever to feudalism as a system of government and left it a mere system of land tenure. Never again after his reign did the nobles seriously attempt to carve the country into independent principalities for themselves. They accepted the unity of England as an accomplished fact which it was beyond the power of man to go back

upon. Thus the reign of Henry II. is one of those great turning points in our history which mark the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. It deserves fuller consideration than that of his three predecessors.

Unless Henry had started with much in his favour he could never have left such a mark upon our history and institutions. In the first place, Henry had the advantage of the wealth and prestige of ruling a great Empire, of which England was only a comparatively small part. From his mother he inherited England and Normandy. From his father, Geoffrey of Anjou, came the counties of Maine and Anjou. By marrying Eleanor of Aquitaine, the divorced wife of Louis VII. of France, he inherited her vast dominions, which embraced practically all the land from the Loire to the Pyrenees and gave him shadowy claims over Toulouse. Add to all this rights over Scotland and Ireland, which he acquired during the course of his reign, and Brittany which went with Normandy, and we see in Henry II. the greatest figure in Europe of his time.

Then, again, Henry in his dealings with England had in his favour the traditional alliance of the people with the crown against the great nobles. This alliance had been strengthened to an infinite degree by the sufferings of the mass of the people during the anarchy of Stephen's reign. The average man had made up his mind once for all that such an age must not return; better any king, however tyrannical, who would stand between him and his oppressors, than a mere feudal suzerain like Stephen.

Lastly, of course, comes perhaps the greatest factor of all in Henry's favour, his own personal character. He was a man of tireless activity. His short thick-set body with its long arms and projecting grey eyes knew no rest.

He ever appeared where he was least expected, and wherever he went he was picking up crumbs of knowledge and ever making the most of what he knew. To this was added a marvellous power of organisation and 'driving power,' and a matchless charm of manner which accounts for much of his success in diplomacy. It is true that these fine qualities were marred by ungovernable fits of bad temper, in which he was known to froth at the mouth, roll on the floor, and chew the straw with which it was strewn. But, except in the case of Becket, his hasty temper never landed him in very serious trouble.

Henry built up his system of centralised monarchy so slowly and unobtrusively that the great nobles, many of them engaged with the Second Crusade, hardly realised what he was doing till it was too late to resist. As soon as he had succeeded to the throne he set about the destruction of all the many castles that had been built during the reign of Stephen and had not received what he considered a proper royal licence. The number of these 'adulterine' castles as they were called was uncertain. One contemporary writer puts the number at 370. Another a little later puts it as over 1000. The statements need not be so conflicting as they look. For many of the castles may have been little more than wooden stockades, and the one writer may be counting only the large stone castles, and the other all castles however small and temporary might be their structure. In an age before the use of explosives castles were the greatest menace to the central power; one well fortified, well provisioned castle, might keep the whole force of a kingdom inactive before it for months and years. Henceforth no castle, and no crenellated walls even, could be built without royal licence.

A greater blow still to the power of the nobles, though they did not realise it at the time, was the commutation of military service for a money payment—scutage as it was called—in 1159. Henry II. did not institute scutage, as has sometimes been supposed. Military service had often been commuted for a money payment in individual cases in earlier reigns. But what Henry did was to make scutage general and regular. Henceforth the great nobles owed the king military service on their own behalf, but paid a certain sum of money in lieu of the service of each knight which was due from their land to the king. Henceforth, a noble would not need to keep up a large standing force of soldiers and to settle on his estates knights who swore to render him military service when called upon. They would let out their land for rent in money, labour or kind, and when they sought to rebel they would find few trained soldiers to lead against the king. At the same time the king would use the scutage to hire foreign mercenaries, and these would be more efficient than the old feudal levy and, what is still more to the point, they would be entirely under the king's own control. The rebellious noble would henceforth be obliged to lead his depleted ranks of half-trained knights against a disciplined body of professional soldiers.

But it was not Henry's design to support his throne on hireling mercenaries. He took measures later on to secure that a sound military training should no longer be a peculiarity of the noble and the feudal tenant. By the Assize of Arms of 1181, he reorganised the old English fryd, that had been such a support to his grandfather Henry I. All freemen were by this Assize ordered to possess arms of a quality varying according to their

wealth. Even the poorest came under this liability; villeins and Jews were the only persons excluded; and during the course of the Thirteenth Century even villeins ceased to be excluded. Now all political power, as has already been remarked, rests ultimately on physical force, however much this may be disguised; and a body of nobles can never have a monopoly of power among a population of fighting men. For the time, however, the importance of the heavily armoured horseman, which had been proved at Senlac, prevented the democratic infantryman from coming to his own.

Another of Henry's mortal wounds to feudal independence was the Inquest of the Sheriffs of 1170. Every noble's great ambition was to become sheriff of the counties in which his power lay and to make the office a hereditary one. His own power, which emanated from his lands, would thus be strengthened by the addition of practically all the king's rights in the district. Under Stephen many of the nobles succeeded in their ambition, and England, as inherited by Henry II., consisted of many large clusters of shires, each cluster under one sheriff, who was also an over-mighty noble. In 1170, therefore, Henry appointed a strong commission to enquire into the conduct of the sheriffs all over England. As a result of the enquiry he dismissed almost all of them and replaced the mighty nobles by his own professional civil servants, much as Henry I. had done. These were thoroughly loyal to the Crown, to which they owed everything, and too weak individually ever to be a menace to it.

(*c*) But the fame of Henry II. and his importance to the future, not only of England but of the civilised world, lies in his great judicial reforms which, in seeking to

depress the barons, gave birth to trial by Jury. These are embodied in a series of royal ordinances called assizes, many of which have perished, and others of which have only survived by the merest accident. We may consider them best by considering how cases, first civil and then criminal, were tried before his time and, then, the changes which he set on foot.

In civil cases the thing most often in dispute was, of course, land, the property *par excellence* of a feudal age. Land disputes amongst great nobles were often settled by private war in Stephen's reign, as it was in other periods on the Continent or on the Welsh Marches. When it was not settled as a dispute is now settled between independent nations, it was tried by 'wager of battle,' that is, by the fighting of two champions chosen respectively by claimant and tenant. These champions were in theory friends of the litigants, but in practice professional pugilists.

If the claimant's champion failed to make the tenant's yield by sunset his claim was rejected and he was fined. This wager of battle was common to most of the Teutonic races, but curiously enough it seems to have died out, if indeed it ever existed, among the English. It was introduced by the Normans and was not at all popular among middle-class people. Men not trained to fighting did not like to see their possessions depend on the skill in arms of the champion of some claimant, whose claim to them was of the flimsiest possible character. Henry made it necessary for a claimant to a piece of land to procure a writ from the king's court before he could bring his claims before the local court. Then the possessor of the land was no longer bound to have the dispute settled by the wager of battle. He could, if he chose, 'put himself

upon the king's grand assize.' That is, he could get a writ from the king ordering the lord of the local court to choose four knights of the shire, and these should choose twelve knights of the neighbourhood in which the disputed land lay. These twelve knights would be required to answer before one of the king's judges as to whether from their knowledge the claimant or the defendant had the better right to the disputed property. By their sworn testimony or verdict the matter was for ever settled. In other cases, where the mere possession of land was in question, and not its ownership, more rapid and less formal inquests by jury were employed. Twelve free and lawful men, not necessarily knights, were summoned to decide whether the defendant had ejected the plaintiff. This was the assize of 'Novel disseism.' For we must remember that the word 'assize' has many meanings. Originally it meant a sitting, then it came to mean a royal ordinance emanating from the sitting of a royal council, and then a law court held in accordance with such an ordinance, as here. A similar summary method of procedure was used in the assize of 'Mort D'ancestor,' when a plaintiff claimed that his inheritance had been seized by another on the death of his father or other relative of whom he was heir. In the case too of a dispute as to the right of presentation to a living the assize of 'Darrien Presentment' decided who it was who enjoyed the right on the last vacancy of the living, so that he or his heir might enjoy the same right again.

By the end of the Twelfth Century the inquest of a Jury came to be part of the normal procedure in a civil action, though many still preferred to rely on the strong arm of a professional pugilist. Henry II. was not, of course, the originator of the inquest of sworn men.

Royal rights and such like questions had been investigated by the oaths of men, summoned from the district concerned, by Frankish kings of the Sixth and Seventh Century. The custom was probably introduced into England by the Normans. The compiling of *Domesday Book* by the sworn testimony of men from each vill is one of the earliest instances in England. Civil cases, to which the king was a party, were regularly settled by a jury in the times of the Norman kings, and there is evidence to show that these kings occasionally granted some specially favoured person the right to have his case settled in the same way.

The application of the Jury system to criminal cases is a longer, though perhaps more interesting, story. The procedure of a court in early Norman days must have been a thing of great human and dramatic interest.[1] The sheriff or lord of the court or his steward would be seated on his chair in some spot in the open air hallowed by immemorial usage. Around him would be gathered the freeholders and others who owed suit at his court. He presides and the suitors ' find the dooms,' that is, they are the repositories of the customs of the district and advise him on matters of local law. The accuser and accused stand forth in the open space before his chair. The accuser utters his accusation and the accused replies (supposing him to plead ' not guilty '), ' you lie.' Then the court addresses itself to the task of deciding between them. They are altogether without the education and the legal training necessary to decide by weighing evidence and cross-examining witnesses ; so recourse is had to ' oath-helpers.'

If the accused can induce a certain number of men of

[1] *v.* Maitland's article in *Social England*, vol. i.

sufficient rank to swear that they believe his oath of innocence then he is regarded as having cleared himself. The number of 'oath-helpers,' or 'compurgators' as they were called in later times, is proportionate to the gravity of the offence, and the value of a man's oath depends upon his social status. A baron's oath would be worth the oaths of a certain number of knights and a knight's oath worth those of many humbler freemen, and so on. The tariff of oath values differed in different districts. The accused would turn to the gathering and call for the oath-helpers to come forward; one by one they would stand out and solemnly swear 'by God that oath is clean and true.' If the number of oath-helpers decided upon by the court cannot be induced to come forward, the accused has failed to clear himself by compurgation. The whole process is carried out according to the most elaborate ceremonial; and the omission of the smallest gesture or the slightest slip in any of the set form of words on the part of plaintiff or of defendant will cause the case to go in favour of his opponent. The wonderful thing about compurgation is that the oath-helpers do not swear that the defendant is not guilty of the crime of which he was accused, but simply that they believe his oath of innocence to be true. A man of good repute in his neighbourhood would have no difficulty in finding oath-helpers; but the disreputable man would fail.

A man who has failed to clear himself by compurgation is put to 'the judgment of God' by the ordeals, or sometimes the court decides to put him to an ordeal without giving him a chance of purging himself by oath-helpers. These ordeals were of many kinds and of heathen character. They were at first opposed by the Church,

but afterwards taken under her care so that the parish priest might have a part in them, and a chance of saving the innocent. The fact that most accounts of the ordeals come from foreign sources and are generally alluded to in some ecclesiastical work in connection with the miraculous intervention of some saint, makes it difficult to get a circumstantial picture in one's mind of what the ordeals were like.

First of all the instruments of the ordeal—fire or water or whatever they may be—are consecrated with a solemn ritual by the priest, in order that they may be God's instruments of revealing the truth. One of the commonest ordeals is that of red hot iron. The accused has to take in his hands a red hot piece of iron one pound in weight, which is handed him in a pair of tongs from a brasier. He has to walk with it three paces, and then he may let it fall. Three days afterwards the seal is broken. If there is 'a blister half as large as a walnut' still remaining, then God has pronounced against him and he is punished as guilty. Or the accused may be thrown into a pit of water. If he is guilty the water will reject him, that is, he will float. If innocent, the water will receive him, or, in other words, he will sink. Or again his ordeal may consist of treading on red hot ploughshares or of swallowing a poisoned piece of bread. In every case it is assumed that God will reveal the guilty.

These ordeals were none of them pleasant things to undergo. But as a rule only disreputable persons who were unable to get a sufficient number of oath-helpers were sent to them.

It must often have happened that a criminal found no accuser before the courts. He might be a dangerous

man ; and no one aware of his guilt might like to take the risk of accusing him. Henry II., therefore, by the first clause of the Assize of Clarendon (1166) ordered that a Jury of Presentment should be summoned to accuse suspected persons. This meant that twelve men of each hundred and four men of each vill should be empanelled by the sheriff and questioned on oath as to whether any man in their district was supposed to have been guilty of murder, robbery, or any other serious offence. Those so accused were sent to the ordeal. This regulation was enlarged in its scope by the Assize of Northampton in 1176. In this Jury of Presentment we have the origin of the Grand Jury, whose duty it is to examine the evidence against an accused person and, if they are satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case against him, to present him for trial at the Assizes.

The origin of the Petty Jury, which has to bring in a decisive verdict of guilty or not guilty, is a longer story. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council abolished the ordeals by forbidding the clergy to take any part in them, and, as England at the beginning of Henry III.'s reign was so much under papal control, the Lateran decree took effect here sooner than elsewhere. The abolition of the ordeals took away the only method of trial known. The courts were at a loss how to proceed. The only method they could think of was that an accused man should be given the opportunity of being tried by a jury, on the understanding that if the jury found him innocent he should be set free. As it might seem inequitable that a man should be tried by his accusers, a fresh jury was often summoned for this purpose instead of the Jury of Presentment. Hence the Petty Jury. But it must be remembered that at first the jury was summoned as men of

the neighbouring vills who would be expected—and not unnaturally in those days of sparse population—to know all about the accused and the evidence against him. Until the end of the Middle Ages the jury had more of the nature of witnesses than of judges of fact who listened to evidence on both sides. It was only very gradually, with the increase of population and of the complications of advancing civilisation, that jurors would find themselves summoned who were not acquainted with all the business of their neighbours for many miles round. When such a state of things came about the custom grew up of summoning witnesses to give evidence in court for the benefit of those jurymen who were not well acquainted with the circumstances of the case which they had to decide.

Trial by jury was purely voluntary in criminal as in civil cases. The accused criminal was asked whether he would 'put himself on his county,' *i.e.* be tried by a jury, seeing that the ordeals were no longer possible. If he agreed the matter was a simple one. But if he refused there was no way of trying him left. He could only be kept in prison indefinitely. Now to medieval men to give a suspected criminal board and lodging at the country's expense would appear to be the last thing in absurdity. So the custom rapidly grew up of bringing pressure rather literally to bear upon the accused man. In Edward I.'s time (1275) the Statute of Westminster I. (§ 12) ordained that notorious felons who refused to be tried should be kept 'en la prison forte and dur.' This rapidly gave rise to the barbarous 'peine forte et dure,' by which an accused man was starved or crushed beneath a load of iron into submission or death. Suspects with a strong case against them not infrequently underwent

this terrible death instead of being tried, because by so doing they died innocent in the eyes of the law, and their lands, which, had they been convicted, would have been forfeit, passed on to their family. The 'peine forte et dure' remained a legal possibility till 1772.

The old methods died hard and trial by jury never gained a footing in the old local courts. This was one of the greatest reasons for their decay and for the importance of the royal courts of the itinerant justices, before which alone a jury was summoned. The right of an accused person to challenge his accuser to trial by battle, in which the two fought in person, unless age or sex gave one of them the privilege of naming a champion, remained a legal possibility till the beginning of the last century (1819). But it was always disliked by the common people. Jocelyn de Brakelond tells of the indignation of the people of Bury S. Edmunds when one of their number was put to death as a result of his failure in trial by battle. It was strongly discouraged also by the royal judges who put many obstacles in its way.

§ 2. (*a*) The result of Henry II.'s reforms was that ever afterwards the unity of England was regarded by the great feudatories as an accomplished fact that there was no going back upon. They made their last efforts at feudal disintegration by taking part in the various rebellions of the king's turbulent sons, which troubled the latter years of his reign. But they battered their heads in vain against the stone wall of his administrative system, and from that time forward the great nobles made a complete change of their policy. They no longer sought to cut pieces out of England each for himself, but spent all their energies instead in trying to monopolise the central power. The old struggle between

nobles versus king and common people goes on in a different form, the bone of contention being now the government of the country as a whole. Out of this struggle for central power emerges modern parliamentary government, just as the jury system was evolved from a struggle for local government in the earlier period.

(*b*) The first outward and visible sign of the nature of the new struggle was Magna Carta, the first of a long series of attempts to take the royal power from the king and hand it over to a committee of great barons. This document has been the subject of so many misconceptions and has exercised so much more power as a myth than as a legal document that it must now demand our attention.

Ever since the Seventeenth Century it has been the custom to regard Magna Carta as the fountain head and the lasting guarantee of all the liberties that made England a free country and its inhabitants free men. A typical expression of the traditional view may be taken from S. James Mackintosh's *History of England* (vol. i. p. 218) which was published in 1853. "We are bound," he says, "to speak with reverential gratitude of the authors of the Great Charter. To have produced it, to have preserved it, to have matured it, constitutes the immortal claim of England upon the gratitude of mankind." This passage might easily be matched, or indeed surpassed, by many others from the literature and rhetoric of the Seventeenth Century. But Magna Carta when it is subjected to the cold light of history fades into a very unimportant document. Shakespeare in his *King John* does not mention it. For the myth was only originated by Sir Edward Coke, the fierce opponent of James I. and Charles I., shortly after Shakespeare's time.

It was originally called ' magna ' in the sense of ' big,' not ' great,' charter, simply because it was physically a longer document than the other charters which were commonly granted by kings of England.

Moreover, clauses of Magna Carta are often made to support the traditional view by reading into them modern ideas, which were quite uncontemplated by their original compilers. Thus, for instance, the first clause confirms the liberties and privileges " to all freemen of my kingdom and their heirs for ever." Now, who was a free man ? The paladins of the traditional view would reply, anyone who was not a villein. A careful study of contemporary documents, however, reveals that a ' freeman ' was a member of a very small class. Thus, for instance, in Clause 20 of the Great Charter a ' free man ' is contrasted with a merchant. Or again, in Clause 34, a free man is spoken of as possessing a private jurisdiction. He is evidently a man of wealth, substance and power and is almost invariably one of the baronial class. Thus, with a few almost insignificant exceptions which we shall consider presently in detail, Magna Carta grants privileges only to members of a narrow oligarchy of barons. It is a piece of class legislation.

Keeping this in mind we approach Clause 39, which was commonly supposed to guarantee the right of all Englishmen to be tried by a jury. It runs as follows : " No free man shall be taken or imprisoned . . . except by the legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." Judgment by one's peers in this clause does not mean trial by jury ; a jury of knights were not necessarily the social equals of the person whom they tried. Moreover, Henry II.'s law courts with their jury system were just what the barons wished to rid themselves of.

'Peer' in the Charter means very much what it does to-day, viz. a baron. Thus this clause did little more than reassert the centuries-old claim of the Norman and French nobility to be tried by their own order, and not by the king's court. It is not the assertion, but the negation, of trial by jury.

Again, clause 14 of the Charter has been taken to be the origin of our Parliamentary system. "Magna Carta," said Edmund Burke, "if it did not give us originally the House of Commons, gave us at least a House of Commons of weight and consequence." The clause in which this misconception originated runs as follows: "And for the holding of the common council of the kingdom we will cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls and greater barons individually by our letters; and moreover, we will cause to be summoned collectively by our sheriffs and bailiffs all those who hold of us in chief." Now many tenants-in-chief were comparatively poor men who held only small quantities of land from the king. Hitherto they had had the right, as tenants-in-chief, to take part in the royal councils. They were often, no doubt, many of them summoned individually, and stood for a democratic element in the council. By this clause they are virtually excluded, as it might be taken for granted that a general invitation from the sheriff was not intended to be accepted. Thus this clause, so far from being a step towards self-government, was an attempt to monopolise political power in the hands of the very small body of the greater barons.

Then, again, writers have waxed eloquent over the fact that even the poor villein is not forgotten in the clauses of this Charter. Clause 20 says, "A free man

shall not be fined for a small offence except in accordance with the nature of the offence, and for a great offence he shall be fined in proportion to the greatness of the offence, saving his feudal holding ; and a merchant in the same way, saving his merchandise ; and a villein in the same way shall be fined saving his 'waynægium' (*i.e.* either his agricultural implements or his crops) if he shall fall into our mercy." Our admiration for the generosity of this clause is considerably damped when we discover that instruments of husbandry of a villein were of more value to the lord of the manor than to the villein himself. If he were deprived of them, he would be unable to serve his lord as well as he had previously done in tilling his demesne and carrying for him. It is very significant in this connection that the villein is protected only from the king and not from his own manorial lord. His lord, and not he, would be the loser should he lose his 'waynagium.' All idea that the authors of Magna Carta were actuated by generosity towards their villeins will be dissipated by reference to another clause (4), which runs as follows : " The guardian of the land of an heir of this kind, who is under age, shall not take from the heir's land anything except reasonable produce, and reasonable customs and reasonable services, and this without destruction and *waste of men* or things." 'Waste of men' means, among other things, giving one of the unfree men of the estate his freedom so that he would no longer be of so much value to his lord. It means also allowing one of the unfree to educate his son (for the priesthood) as this would involve the loss of his son's labour to the lord of the manor.

If any further evidence of the anti-popular and reactionary character of the Great Charter is needed, it

is to hand in the 61st clause, which legalises under certain circumstances private warfare of the barons against the king. If any infraction of the Charter by the king is brought to his notice in the proper manner and he fails to redress the infraction within forty days, the barons with the people of the whole of the country shall compel him " by all the means in their power, by the taking of castles, lands and possessions, and by all other means possible, saving our person and the persons of our queen and children." Thus the Charter complacently contemplated a revival of all the horrors of Stephen's reign, whenever the barons chose to think that the king or his officers had violated any of the provisions of this very long Charter.

In view of the foregoing it cannot be supposed that the Charter was the work of generous and far-seeing men, or that it was of much immediate value. There are, none the less, senses in which the Charter really deserves the title 'great.' Thus, for instance, the manner in which it was obtained, the forced signature, was a very great blow to royal prestige, which had been strengthened so tremendously by the administrative reforms of Henry II. The time had come when royal despotism had done its work and the barons by taking power from the king were taking a step towards the distribution of that power among a larger class than their own. Then, again, four hundred years after its signature the Charter became a powerful engine in the hands of Parliamentary leaders who were opposing the Stuarts. It enabled them to appeal to the innate conservatism of England by representing their innovations as mere revivals of the clauses of the great Charter, no one at that time realising that the meanings put upon its clauses in the Seventeenth Century

were as different from their original intent as Stephen Langton was different from Oliver Cromwell.

(*c*) The obtaining of Magna Carta, then, was one phase, and in many ways a comparatively unimportant phase, of the struggle between the monarchy and the baronage. The struggle continues during the reign of Henry III., and in the course of the struggle both parties seek to strengthen themselves by an alliance with the middle class, which gradually comes into prominence in town and country during the Thirteenth Century. These attempts at alliance lead to the representation of the middle classes in the Great Council, which comes to be called Parliament, for the first time in the reign of Henry III. So the development of Parliament in the Thirteenth Century must claim our attention for the rest of this chapter.

Long before the Norman Conquest it had been the custom of kings of England to consult with a council of the wise men of their dominions. This 'Witan,' as it was called, advised the king on matters of government, assented to his decrees, and, on the death of a king, chose a successor from the charmed circle of the royal family. The power of this council would depend much on the personal qualities of each particular king. Under a weak one the Witan would be the real ruler of the country—that is, if any central power could be said to rule at all in those days. Under a strong king the chief duty of the members of the Witan would be to publish the king's decrees, each man in his own district. The members of the Witan were not chosen under any hard and fast rule. The great earls and the bishops would sit in it as a matter of course. The other members would be chosen for the qualification of 'wisdom,' more or less at

the king's discretion. At the Norman Conquest William, following his usual policy of keeping up an outward appearance of continuity with old times, continued the pre-conquest Witan as his Great Council. But the Great Council was systematically feudalised. Those who sat in it were almost all tenants-in-chief, and tenancy-in-chief soon came to be regarded as an indispensable qualification for membership. All tenants-in-chief also came to regard themselves as *ex-officio* members, though, as we have seen, many very humble and obscure men became, in the course of escheatage, etc., tenants-in-chief. The king summoned as a matter of course all the great feudatories to every council, but drew the line according to his own discretion between the tenants-in-chief who were 'greater' and those who were 'lesser.' Though it is probable that long before clause 14 of Magna Carta all the lesser tenants-in-chief received a general summons. It was a Great Council, so constituted, that, in theory at any rate, elected the Norman and early Angevin kings and assented to their decrees. Thus, for instance, Henry I. says in his coronation charter: "Know ye that I by the mercy of God and the common council of the barons of the Kingdom of England have been crowned king of the same kingdom." Or again, the famous Assize of Clarendon, 1166, is stated to have been made by Henry II. "with the assent of the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls and barons of all England."

The extorting of the Charter from King John taught the barons their strength, and so we find that under Henry III. the Great Council gains vastly in prestige. It is recognised that the king may not levy direct taxes without its consent; and demands for money are met by the Council with demands for reform. Even as early

as this, Parliament, as the Great Council now begins to be called, finds that having the purse strings in its own hands it can extort almost any privileges it will from a needy king.

Side by side with this growth of prestige of the Great Council comes the growth of a system of representation of the commons which must now demand our attention. Now, the custom of representation of bodies of people by a few members was a very old one in England. Almost from time immemorial the townships had been accustomed to send the reeve and four of the best men to represent it in the courts of the Hundred and of the Shire to which they belonged ; and in Henry II.'s reign it was the custom for each borough to send twelve lawful burgesses to represent it in the shire court on the occasion of a visit from the king's justices. In the jury system too the jurors were regarded as speaking in the name of all the people, whether county or vicinity, whom they represented.

The transition from the representative shire court to the representative Parliament was not a very big one ; and there is some doubt as to who was the first king to bring it about. There is some evidence to show that there were representative national assemblies under King John. Thus Matthew Paris, the famous chronicler, tells us that after John's submission to the Pope he summoned an assembly to S. Albans on August 4, 1213, in order to assess the damages which the clergy had sustained during their period of outlawry, in order that he might be able to compensate them. To this assembly he summoned, we are told, not only the bishops and barons, but the reeve and four men from each township on the royal demesne. In the same year we have another record of a Great Council

held at Oxford on November 7. This time there are no representatives of the towns summoned to take their place with the barons ; but four knights are summoned from each shire, and the sheriffs are to see that they come armed. They are to represent the shire ; but it is not clear whether they were elected or chosen by the sheriff. It is not certain that either of these assemblies actually sat ; and for the subsequent forty years we have no record of the summons of representatives of the commons to Westminster or elsewhere.

We do not meet with an instance of representatives again till Henry III.'s campaign in Gascony in 1254. On this occasion the Regents of the Kingdom, Queen Eleanor and Richard, Earl of Cornwall, summoned a Parliament to meet at Westminster, and issued writs to the sheriffs of the counties to send two knights to represent each county. The knights are to be chosen by the county court " in place of all and each of the same county " ; and they are to take part in the deliberations for which the Parliament is summoned, viz. the granting of an aid to the king. Four years later baronial opposition to the heavy taxation came to a head in a Great Council summoned at London on April 9, 1258. The barons' remedy for abuses was to take away the king's power and to entrust it to a small committee of twenty-four, twelve chosen by the king and twelve by the barons. This committee met at Oxford on June 11, and was called by the royalists the Mad Parliament. They drew up the complicated document known as the Provisions of Oxford, which provided a series of committees chosen indirectly in a most complicated way by the barons. These Provisions were so patently the work of a selfish and incompetent oligarchy of barons that the king

recovered much of his popularity with the mass of the people; and civil war broke out. During the contest the barons sought to strengthen their position by throwing a sop to the Commons, and summoned to S. Albans three knights from each county "to consult with them about the common business of the kingdom." The king replied by issuing writs to the sheriffs to summon these three knights to meet him instead at Windsor "to speak with us about the aforesaid matters."

When the genius of Simon de Montfort won the victory at Lewes on May 14, 1264, he sought to gain as much popular support as possible, to make up for the sparseness of his baronial following, by summoning representatives both of the counties and of the boroughs to his famous Parliament of January 20, 1265. To this were summoned not only two knights to represent each shire, but also two citizens from each city and two burgesses from each borough. Thus we have at last, on the face of it at any rate, a complete House of Commons, consisting of town and of county members. Simon de Montfort, therefore, has been the supreme hero of mid-Victorian historians, to whom Parliaments were the panacea of all the ills that flesh is heir to. There are, however, certain things we must remember before we break out into extravagant eulogy of Simon, Earl of Leicester.

In the first place, town representatives were not summoned from all the important towns, but only from those who supported De Montfort. Secondly, De Montfort himself was a foreign adventurer. He belonged to a class of selfish oligarchs; and he only sought popular support because he had lost the support of many of the barons, and because many of the towns happened to be in his favour. Moreover, there was little originality in

his measures. Many countries of the Continent, Arragon for instance, had had representatives of the towns in their Parliaments long before De Montfort's time. Even in England, as we have seen, there was probably a precedent in John's time for the summoning of town representatives to a Great Council.

After the defeat of Simon at Evesham till the end of Henry's reign the kingdom enjoyed a period of profound peace, and there is no certain evidence of the summoning of either knights or citizens to the later Parliaments. Edward I. began a series of experiments in representative government. Sometimes four knights were summoned from each shire, sometimes two representatives from each town. Sometimes many towns were represented; sometimes few. At one time Edward gathered a body of merchants in order to gain a grant of money from them, and it looked as if a separate estate of merchants might develop in Parliament. At last in 1295 Edward summoned a Parliament which, though he knew it not, was destined to be the model for future parliaments. It was a time of great emergency. The French had overrun Gascony, and had sent a fleet to make descents upon the English coast. The Welsh were in rebellion. Accordingly an assembly was summoned to meet at Westminster so constituted that it should have power to tax the whole nation. The summons to the bishops contains the famous quotation: "that which touches all should be approved by all."

In this famous Parliament, which has come to be regarded as the prototype of all later legislative assemblies, the three estates of the realm (as they were afterwards called under French influence) are represented, mankind in the medieval conception being divisible

into three classes, those who fight, those who pray and those who work. (i) The first estate, the lords, was represented by earls and 'greater' barons. (ii) The second estate, the clergy, was represented by the bishops, the mitred abbots of the larger monasteries and representatives of the lesser clergy. (iii) The commons were represented by two knights from each shire and by two burgesses from each town which, in the opinion of the sheriff of the county in which it was situated, was important enough to be represented in Parliament.

When Lords and Commons took to sitting in separate houses in the reign of Edward II., the physical evolution of the English Parliament was complete. We must, however, be on our guard against assuming that a medieval Parliament had much in common with its Twentieth Century descendants. In the first place, we must remember that representation in it was regarded not as a privilege but as a burden. Thus, for instance, the clergy succeeded in absenting themselves from Parliament and meeting in their own assemblies, the two Convocations of Canterbury and York, in which they voted their grants of money to the Crown—smaller grants than would have been the case had they sat in Parliament. The clergy are still in theory an estate of the realm and are still formally summoned, but they have never accepted the summons since the end of the Thirteenth Century. Of course the bishops and mitred abbots in their secular capacity of greater barons sat in the House of Lords, which remained till the Reformation a predominantly clerical assembly. The commons, even more than the clergy, regarded representation as a burden. Members of the House of Commons had to be paid, a burgess at the rate of two shillings and a shire

representative at the rate of four shillings a day—a heavy burden on the poor and sparsely populated communities of those days. Moreover, representation meant hardly any political power, as this was in the hands of the lords. It simply meant higher taxation. From the elected member's point of view also membership was regarded as anything but a privilege. It involved long neglect of business, a long and dangerous journey and many expenses, for which even his high salary was not usually an adequate compensation. Having arrived at the assembly his opinion was rarely asked on matters of policy. He had as a rule no opportunity of stating the demands and grievances of his fellow townsmen. He was simply brow-beaten by the royal officers into assenting to a large grant of money, knowing well that on his return home his fellow burgesses would want to know why he had made such reckless grants of their money without any instructions from them. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that many towns bribed the sheriff to disfranchise them. One of them was Birmingham, which, consequently, remained unrepresented till 1832. Similarly, it is not surprising to find that many men were willing to pay considerable sums of money to escape the burden of membership of Parliament.

Lastly, we must be on our guard against supposing that the evolution of Parliament led to any democratic tendencies in the government. Parliament in the later Middle Ages was constantly anti-popular in its measures, while kings, such as Richard II., seem to have had real democratic sympathies. Thus, for instance, it was by Acts of Parliament that villeins were forbidden to apprentice their sons to any of the craft guilds or to educate their children. It was Parliament that was

responsible for the Statutes of Labourers after the Black Death, and that refused to allow Richard II. to keep his pledges to the oppressed peasantry after the great revolt of 1381 ; and later on it was Parliament that in 1431 restricted the shire franchise to the narrow circle of forty-shilling freeholders. Moreover, the House of Commons was more anti-popular than the Lords. For members in the later Middle Ages were elected under the influence of great nobles and were largely under their control. So far as there was a democratic element in Parliament it was in the House of Lords. This House, as we have seen, contained a majority of clerics, many of them of humble origin and retaining the sympathies of their early years. The mass of the people, if ever they had any political opinions, looked not to Parliament but to the king for the care of their interests.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CORPORATIONS—THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

§ 1. The Investitures Controversy.
(*a*) The Hildebrandine Reformation.
(*b*) Anselm and Rufus.
(*c*) Anselm and Henry I.
§ 2. The Ecclesiastical Courts and Becket.
§ 3. The Monasteries.
(*a*) The Origin of Monasticism.
(*b*) Life within a Monastery.
(*c*) The Cluniac Reformation.
(*d*) The Carthusians and Cistercians.
(*e*) The influence and importance of the Monasteries.

§ 1. History never repeats itself because no two sets of circumstances are ever identical. But the aspirations of distant ages frequently reflect one another. This is curiously true of the relation between the aspirations of the Twentieth Century and those of the Middle Ages. These two widely different ages reflect one another, especially, in two particulars. First, the Middle Ages were non-national: Western Europe was a unity; but not, for instance, England or France. So that those Twentieth Century aspirations such as find expression in the League of Nations were more than mere aspirations in the Middle Ages. Secondly, the Middle Ages saw men organised into corporations based on community of

pursuits and interests, and cutting across geographical and dynastic barriers in a way that bears a more than superficial resemblance to the aspirations of Twentieth Century syndicalists. The non-national and corporate features of medieval life find their clearest exemplification in three great types of corporations which now demand our attention. First, there is the greatest corporation of all, the Catholic Church with its subordinate corporations of monasteries and religious orders. Secondly, there are the Trade Guilds of the towns. Lastly, connected with them, come those cosmopolitan republics of letters which gradually came to be called Universities.

If we were writing a sketch of the history of the last century we should make very slight allusion to the Church, but the history of the Middle Ages is essentially Church history, the guiding hand in every activity of man is the hand of the Church. The civilisation of the Middle Ages is an ecclesiastical civilisation. The Church was synonymous with the population of Western Europe—all except the Jews and the Moors of Spain.

(*a*) In order to account for the power and influence of the Church in the Middle Ages, it is necessary to bring into view a few events on the Continent before the beginning of our period. In the Dark Ages the moral standard of the Church sank, like everything else, to a very low level. The bishops were often mere secular nobles without learning or spiritual influence, and the popes were mere puppets either of emperors or of Italian nobles or of the populace of Rome. During the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries there had been many attempts at reform, and at securing the spiritual independence of the Pope. The Cluniac reform in the early Tenth Century aroused the dormant conscience of Western

Europe ; and the rise of Hildebrand in the middle of the Eleventh Century, first as the power behind St. Peter's chair and then as Pope himself, marks a fresh starting point in the history of papal power. He became Pope as Gregory VII. in 1073. His saintly austerity of life, his fiery zeal, his singleness of purpose, combined with rare business and diplomatic gifts, made him the greatest man of his age, and one of the greatest men of all ages. His claim and conviction was that the Pope is the supreme ruler of all Christendom, that all bishops and all secular rulers are vassals to the overlord in Rome. He succeeded to a wonderful degree in putting his theory into practice over a large part of Europe. At a council, held at Rome in 1075, he forbade marriage of the clergy, which he held to be largely responsible for the worldliness of the Church, and the slightness of its spiritual ascendancy. He also condemned simony in all its forms, and threatened to excommunicate all bishops and abbots who should receive the symbols of spiritual office from a layman, and all secular princes who should invest a bishop or abbot with these symbols. This clause about investiture is the crux of the whole matter. It has given its name to a long struggle of two centuries between the Pope on one side, and the emperor and other secular princes of Europe, on the other. It had long been the custom for kings to nominate bishops and, as bishops were important tenants-in-chief, to receive homage from them. The king would also invest them with the ring and the pastoral staff, the symbols of their spiritual power. This looked as if the spiritual power of a bishop was derived from a mere lay prince who might be, and often was, a man of infamous character. It was very easy to confuse the secular and the spiritual sides of a prelate's

privileges. Under such a system the Church could have no real spiritual independence. Lay princes appointed to high office clergy of the kind which they liked, but not of the kind that was spiritually good for them. Thus the Church could not do her work properly without being spiritually independent, and she could not be spiritually independent without being politically supreme. So the real question at issue all over Europe was this : Shall the Church be a mere department of the state or the state be a mere department of the Church ?

Hildebrand's chief opponent was the Emperor Henry IV., who, as successor of Charlemagne and of the Emperors of Ancient Rome, claimed to be suzerain of all the states of Christendom. But Hildebrand prevailed, and Henry made his humiliating submission at Canossa (1076). It is true that the Pope's vaulting ambition at last overleaped itself ; and the great Gregory VII. died in exile. " I have loved justice and hated iniquity ; therefore I die in exile " is his famous deathbed utterance. But his work and his aims outlived him. Other Popes walked in the path that he had marked out till at the beginning of the Thirteenth Century Innocent III. reduces King John of England and nearly all the other kings of Europe to the position of humble dependants.

(*b*) Thus the quarrel between Anselm and Rufus in England, to which we must now turn our attention, was merely a side-show in a great European struggle. It is, however, a side-show of great human interest, owing to the character of the two great actors, William Rufus and Anselm. Rufus, after we have discounted to the full the prejudiced picture of the Monastic Chronicles, seems to have been almost as bad as man could be. " Never day dawned," says one of the chroniclers, " but he rose a

worse man than he had lain down : never sun set but he lay down a worse man than he had arisen." He had many kingly qualities it is true : he was, for instance, almost as good a general as his father, and the common people—always good judges—loved him in spite of his heavy taxes. But as a man he was immoral, drunken and blasphemously irreligious to a degree that shocked even the low standard of public opinion of his day. He was a type of the lay prince that gave point to Hildebrand's fervid denunciations of lay investitures and of lay control in matters spiritual. Rufus appointed creatures of his own—Ranulf Flambard, Bishop Palatine of Durham, is a good example—to high ecclesiastical dignities, often as a reward for doing his dirty work for him. Furthermore, by Flambard's own advice he adopted the plan of keeping bishoprics and abbacies vacant on the death of a prelate and appropriating the revenues to himself, thus approximating the lands of a bishop or abbot to a lay fief, which escheated to the crown in default of heirs. At the end of his reign one archbishopric, four bishoprics, and eleven abbies were without pastors. In 1089 Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury and friend of the Conqueror, died and Rufus kept the see vacant, refusing to appoint a successor. But three years later Rufus grew very ill and feared that he was going to die. Like many irreligious men, he was at heart intensely superstitious. He strove in frenzied haste to make his peace with God while as yet there was time, and fell in with the long expressed wishes of the country by appointing the famous Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Anselm, who had succeeded Lanfranc as prior and then as abbot of the great Norman Abbey of Bec, was one of

the greatest scholars in Europe of his time. His dialogue on the ultimate meaning and purpose of the Incarnation, *Cur Deus Homo?* gives us a vivid glimpse of the depth and learning and intellectual boldness of which the leading thinkers of the Middle Ages were capable. Anselm was also a saint, and would have loved nothing better than to spend his life in the calm obscurity of the cloister, his horizon bounded by his books and his religious exercises. He seemed wholly compacted of kindliness, gentleness and humility. But like many a man of that kind he had a courage and a will-power that a warrior might have envied. Regarded from a worldly point of view, there could hardly have been a more unsuitable Primate. He had none of the practical commonsense and statesmanlike knowledge of the world necessary for what was then a great political, as well as a spiritual, office. The words, expediency and compromise, had no place in his vocabulary. Every cause, in his eyes, was either right or wrong. If right, nothing on earth should make him swerve a hair's breadth from following it. If wrong, nothing would ever induce him to think of it. He was one of those men who are incapable of seeing that there are two sides to any question ; and he was a supporter of the Hildebrandine claims of the Papacy in their most extreme form.

He was summoned to the bed-side of the sick king and offered the Primacy. He refused ; and only under the strongest pressure accepted. But he accepted only on three conditions : first, that the king should recognise Urban II. as Pope, the emperor having set up a puppet anti-pope ; secondly, that all the property of the see of Canterbury should be restored ; and, thirdly, that Rufus should always act by his counsel and advice. The king

face to face, as he thought, with death and judgment to come agreed to all these conditions, and Anselm was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury.

Then William recovered from his illness. All his piety evaporated. He felt that he had been a fool to be frightened into giving away the lucrative see of Canterbury. The austere Anselm on his part boldly rebuked the vices of Rufus' court—vices real and imaginary—the gay dresses, the long pointed shoes and the beards grown long—instead of short and stubby—so as to be soft to ladies' cheeks. It was not long, therefore, before the king and archbishop were at daggers drawn. William demanded a gift when Anselm entered on his see, just as if it were a lay feif liable to a relief. He refused, on the ground that such a gift would be simony. Then he asked permission to go to Rome to be invested in person with the 'pallium,' woven from wool of the lambs of S. Agnes, as Archbishops of Canterbury had always done. Rufus replied—disregarding his promise—that there were two popes and that he had not yet decided which was the right one. Rufus wanted himself to invest the archbishop with the 'pallium.' To have consented would have been the blackest treason to all the aspirations of the reformed Papacy. Anselm, of course, refused, and would probably have been deposed by the king, had it not appeared that nobles and commons were united in their support of the archbishop. The conscience of England, as of most of the Continent at this time, was on the side of Papal claims. It was the support of the mass of Christian people that enabled the Popes of the Thirteenth Century to bind the kings in chains. It is significant that almost the only supporters of the red king were Anselm's brother bishops. There could

hardly be a more damning indictment than this against the system of lay patronage and investitures which Hildebrand and his successors strove to destroy.

The matter of the 'pallium' was compromised. Anselm invested himself with it. But there could be no peace between king and primate. William subjected him to all kinds of petty persecution, and finally accused him of sending his contingent to the Welsh wars improperly equipped. Anselm asked leave to go and consult the Pope. He was told to go away and not to come back again. He went; and for the rest of William's life the revenues of the see of Canterbury went to the king.

(*c*) For the next six years Anselm remained on the Continent, and during that time attended a council at Rome which reiterated in the strongest terms the Hildebrandine denunciations of lay investiture. When, therefore, Henry I. recalled him to England on his accession to the throne of his brother in 1100, Anselm returned with stronger views than ever against the appointment or investiture of bishops and abbots by the king. Henry claimed that it was his right inherited from his ancestors. So the struggle was at once renewed. But there was no scandal this time. Henry was just as immoral as Rufus; but Henry was a hypocrite and always outwardly respectable, where his brother had not been so. This time, therefore, Anselm obtained permission to seek a solution of the quarrel at the Papal Court, and set out for Rome "in the king's peace invested with all that belonged to him." The moment in the great European struggle was favourable for a compromise as the Pope needed the friendship of Henry. It was, therefore, agreed that the king should receive the homage and fealty of a bishop-elect before his consecration, but "the

king granted and decreed that from that time forth for ever no one should be invested in England with bishopric or abbey, by staff or ring either by king or by any lay hand." The rights of chapters to elect their superiors was allowed, but the election had to be made in the king's chapel. This meant that the king lost the shadow but retained the substance. The provision about the elections being made in the king's chapel meant that in fact—though not in theory—the king would choose the prelate—the electing chapter being altogether under his thumb. Thus originated the fiction of bishops elected by the chapter which still survives. When a bishopric is vacant the chapter still receives the royal *congé d'élire*, but they also receive another document containing the names of three candidates; and they dare do no other than elect the first candidate named on the list.

§ 2. Henry I. had won a real victory, and continued throughout his reign to curb the power of the Pope in every way consistent with avoiding a contest with so formidable an antagonist. The battlefield between Church and State in England now shifts from investitures to the claims of church courts; and culminates in the martyrdom of S. Thomas Becket. The roots of this matter go back to the days of the Conqueror, who had separated the secular courts and the courts Christian. In Saxon times the earl or sheriff and the bishop had sat side by side in the shire courts, and all cases, whether secular or religious, had been tried in the same court. William I. set up special courts Christian, with the right of trying all cases "which touched the cure of souls." This was a most elastic term, and the church courts from the first took full advantage of its elasticity. With a little special pleading almost any case might be made

out to be one "which touched the cure of souls." A breach of contract, for instance, might be regarded as a case of perjury and therefore within the cognisance of the archdeacon's court. All disputes affecting a religious house, see or benefice, all crimes committed by clerks or against them came within the jurisdiction of the Church Courts.

After the anarchy of Stephen and Matilda, when Henry II. was putting the State in order again, he soon found himself in opposition to the courts Christian. The objections to them were manifold. In the first place, there was the utter inadequacy of the punishments dealt out to clergy convicted of crime. Clergy guilty of serious offences often escaped with a trifling penance or suspension from office, and the worst penalty which courts Christian could inflict was degradation; and degradation meant simply that the clerk would be expelled from the ranks of the clergy and for all future offences be subject to the jurisdiction of the secular courts. Thus a clerk could commit his first offence with comparative impunity. Furthermore, the category of clerks included a considerable proportion of the population. It included all the learned professions, all the servants and minor officials of all ecclesiastical institutions, and all who held minor orders—orders which involved hardly any obligations and little or no learning. Another grievance was that the archdeacons who managed the courts were sometimes men of no position and of indifferent character. "Can an archdeacon be saved?" was a knotty question in medieval theology. Frequently they were not in priests' orders, and they strove to make large profits by exacting exorbitant fees and fines. One of the things which first drew Henry II.'s attention to abuses of church

courts was the petition in 1158 of a citizen of Scarborough, who prayed assistance against an archdeacon who had been trying to levy blackmail by threatening to accuse his wife of adultery when there was, in fact, no evidence of any kind against her. Though the king himself took the matter up, the archdeacon went unpunished. On this occasion the king made the angry remark that the archdeacons extorted from his subjects more money than his own revenue. Perhaps the worst grievance from the king's point of view was that there lay an appeal from the local courts Christian, ultimately, to Rome. So that an offence might either be carried out of the country to be tried, or might be tried by the Pope's commissioners sent to England for the purpose. So long as an indefinitely large number of offences lay outside his jurisdiction in this way the king could not be master of his own house. From the end of the Twelfth Century onward we find the rising tide of national feeling in England coming ever more and more in conflict with Papal jurisdiction till it at last overwhelms it at the Reformation.

On the other hand, there was a great deal of feeling in the country in favour of the courts Christian—and not without good reason. Thus, in the first place there is no doubt that a man got a more scientific trial in a church court. The lay courts at this time were, as we have seen, governed by an uncouth tangle of precedent, custom and superstition. It will be remembered how resort was had to the barbarous ordeals because the lay authorities had not sufficient education to sift evidence. The church courts, on the contrary, administered canon law, a legacy of the ancient civilisation of Rome. They had a monopoly of all the best brains and of all the

education in Europe. When a criminal case came before them the evidence of the accusers was taken down and carefully sifted, and if their evidence was found to be inconclusive the accused had the right of clearing himself by the oath of compurgation, that is of men of sufficient standing—if such were forthcoming—who were prepared to swear that they believed the oath of innocence of the accused to be true. The law of evidence as understood by the Church was comparatively scientific, and many false accusations which would have been taken by a lay court as proved were rejected by the church court as baseless. It was only those whose guilt was not proven who had a chance of escaping by compurgation; and only men of very good reputation could escape by this means. Another reason for the popularity of church courts was that they were often found to be the protectors of the poor and oppressed. In Stephen's time, especially, it was almost impossible for a weak man to obtain justice against a great noble in a lay court. The church courts on the contrary belonged to a society too strong to be intimidated; and the prelates were frequently men of humble origin, who still sympathised with the oppressed classes from which they themselves had sprung. The church courts regularly constituted themselves the protectors of the widow and the orphan when there was no other power that would, and could, protect them.

The struggle of Henry II. to modify the jurisdiction of the church courts obtains an added human interest from the psychology of S. Thomas Becket. In his youth men saw in him only the light-hearted courtier, loving gorgeous clothes, brilliant equipages and feats of strength and daring. He was Henry II.'s fastest friend.

"Never in Christian times," says FitzStephen, "were two men more of a mind or better friends." Together they reformed the administration of the disordered kingdom; together they drove their elders to gloomy forebodings by their nocturnal escapades in the streets of London. Then, on the death of the saintly Theobald in 1162, Henry secured the election of his friend to the see of Canterbury, and Becket the Primate becomes a different man from Becket the Chancellor and friend of Henry II. Some have seen in the saintly austerity of the life which he now led only vulgar hypocrisy. To do so is entirely to misunderstand the mentality of medieval man. There are numberless instances of men in these times turning impulsively at some touch of conscience from bloody and immoral lives to a career of sublime sanctity and self-abnegation. Becket, on his elevation to the see of Canterbury, seems quite genuinely to have risen to the occasion, and to have determined to serve God in his new office as faithfully as he had previously served his king.

Now that Becket had become archbishop, Henry thought that his way to the fulfilment of his long-cherished plans was clear. He was soon undeceived. A canon of Lincoln, clearly guilty of homicide, had been acquitted by the church courts and had set the king's justices at defiance, and the king, owing to the attitude of Becket, was unable to secure his punishment. Then came a quarrel in a Great Council at Woodstock, in which Becket opposed some obscure financial reform of the king, and carried the magnates with him to such an extent that Henry had to swallow down his rage and withdraw the measure. At last in a Great Council at Clarendon in 1164 Henry brought forward his plan for the

reform of the courts Christian in the famous Constitutions of Clarendon. The king's exact intention has been the subject of some dispute. But it seems to have been this : that if a clerk were accused of any secular offence he should be tried, as previously, by the church court. But if he were found guilty he should no longer pay the trifling penalty exacted by that court, but should be brought before the king's court, which should visit upon him the adequate, and usual, secular penalty for the offence in question. At Clarendon Becket showed the white feather in a most unaccountable way—and for the one and only time in his career. When a deputation from the king approached him in a threatening attitude he assented to the Constitutions. Then, when his followers reproached him with his weakness, he humbly admitted his fault, retracted his assent and appealed to the Pope. Henceforth king and archbishop became bitter enemies. At the Council of Northampton Henry raked up all kinds of charges against him and demanded an account of all the money he had spent during his Chancellorship—this in spite of a settlement to which he had agreed when Becket resigned the office of Chancellor. Becket fled to France, where Louis VII. gladly welcomed him as a means of weakening his over-mighty vassal.

During Becket's absence Henry, who, mindful of the anarchy that had preceded his own reign, was anxious to secure the succession to his eldest son Henry, followed the example of many Continental rulers in having him crowned during his own lifetime. Now, it had been the undoubted rights of the Archbishops of Canterbury from the earliest times to crown the king. But Henry had no option but to employ the Archbishop of York to carry out the ceremony. Becket, angered at being ignored,

appealed to the Pope, who threatened Henry with an interdict. This brought about a hollow reconciliation between king and archbishop. But Becket had no sooner landed in England (Dec. 1, 1170) than he excommunicated the Archbishop of York and all the bishops who had taken part in the coronation of Prince Henry. Anything tending to invalidate the succession of his son was particularly painful to the king. Moreover, he was a man in whom the fierce temper of the Plantagenets was exemplified to a unique degree. The news of Becket's latest action threw him into one of those fits of fury to which he was subject. He uttered wild words against the archbishop, and no incident in our history is better known than the way in which three knights took him at his word, and slew the unflinching archbishop before the high altar of his own cathedral.

The murder of Becket is one of the most important events in English history. The whole of Christendom was shocked, and Henry II., strong king though he was, only retained his throne owing to his penances at Becket's tomb, and to the temporary embarrassments of the Pope which made him unwilling to take extreme measures with so powerful a prince. Becket was canonised, and the pilgrimage to Canterbury, immortalised by the genius of Chaucer, became one of the most popular religious activities of the Middle Ages. Becket's death postponed for more than four hundred years the reform of church courts and, possibly, of the Church in general. Just as we owe our English monarchy to-day in no small degree to the execution of King Charles I., so the later medieval Church in England owed its position to the martyrdom of S. Thomas Becket. The generation that begins with this deed in Canterbury Cathedral marks the high-water

mark of the power of Church and Pope in England. It ends with King John's submission to Pope Innocent III., and the Papal exploitation of England under Henry III.

§ 3. (*a*) When we consider these victorious struggles of the Church against powerful princes, we may well ask how the Church managed to become so strong. The answer to a large extent is that it was strong owing to its ascendancy over the minds and consciences and, sometimes, over the superstitious instincts of the mass of mankind in Western Europe. This ascendancy was due in no small measure to the monastic institutions of the Church, to which we must now turn our attention. The practice of retiring from the world to live a life of higher spirituality than the mass of mankind is one of immemorial antiquity. Christian monasticism seems to have begun with certain ascetics who followed the famous S. Anthony in living a hermit's life in the deserts of Egypt in the Third Century. The practice spread rapidly to Europe, and the Fourth and Fifth Centuries saw a passion for the ascetic life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Men no longer lived as solitaries, but formed themselves into communities following a definite rule of life and devotion. In the earlier part of the Sixth Century the famous S. Benedict formed the monastery of Monte Cassino ; and his ' rule ' became practically universal in Western Europe. When the Roman Empire crumbled away in the floods of barbarian invasion, these monasteries remained almost the only islands of learning and humanity in the great ocean of barbarity and bloodshed. Without the protecting walls of the monasteries it is difficult to see how any of the lamps of classical culture could have preserved their flame during the stormy night of the Dark Ages.

Monasteries were sometimes founded by men of blood-thirsty and immoral lives, who seemed to have reasoned with themselves in this way : " I love Christ and his law. But I find it quite impossible to serve Him myself. The temptations of the flesh are too strong for me. So I will found this house in order that other men, who are able to do so, may lead pure and holy lives ; and I trust that God, who knows my weakness in temptation, will have mercy on me for the sake of the holy lives I have enabled these other men to live." Some such thought as this seems to be at the back of many a monastic charter granted by the warriors of the early Middle Ages.

(*b*) The Benedictine rule in action can best be appreciated by considering the plan and daily life of a typical English monastery in the early Middle Ages. By far the most prominent part of the building would be the chapel. It would be very large, high and carefully built, as compared with the rest of the monastery. The chapel of the monastery of Bury S. Edmunds was one of the largest buildings in Europe, having a floor space of over 60,000 sq. ft. The interior of the chapel would be divided into two parts by a screen. East of the screen was the long choir which the monks occupied at their devotions. Any ancient church which has a long choir is generally suspected of having been a monastic one. West of the screen was the nave, which might be occupied by visitors and dependants of the abbey. Near the eastern end of the chapel would be the high altar, rising by many steps above the level of the choir. Its surroundings would be gorgeously decorated with painting, gold and gems. Sometimes the reredos, behind the altar, would be of solid gold, like that one which the Abingdon Chronicle states to have been made by S.

Ethelwold for the high altar of Abingdon Abbey chapel. Besides this great altar there would be many others—one dedicated to the Virgin Mary, others to the patron saint or saints, others on which masses would be said for the souls of benefactors of the abbey. More often than not there would be the shrine of some famous saint, like that of S. Edmund at Bury S. Edmunds, resplendent with gold and gems, the gifts of pilgrims from distant shires and from distant lands. South of the chapel would be the cloisters—a covered arcade in the form of a quadrangle running round a green plot called the garth. The cloisters would be the scene of the monks' daily life and activities. On one side of the cloisters would be held the monastic school. Another side would be fitted up with screened enclosures, called 'carols,' where the monks would occupy themselves with their studies. Round the cloisters would be the other monastic buildings. On the east would usually be the chapter-house, where the monks met in council every morning after mass, and where all the business of the monastery was usually transacted. The refectory, where the monks took their meals, lay near the kitchen on the south side of the quadrangle, so that the noise and smell of the meals should be as far as possible removed from the chapel. Another important room would be the scriptorium, with its high desks and painting and writing materials. It was here that the legal documents incidental to the conduct of great estates were copied out. Here, also, the beautifully illuminated service books were made with a loving care and patient toil that have made the surviving manuscripts the wonder of all generations since the prevalence of printing put manuscript writing among the lost arts. The abbey chronicle would also find a

place in the scriptorium, and the news of the outside world, eagerly gleaned from travellers, and written on strips of parchment, would be copied from time to time into the great volume. Another room of importance would be the almonry, where the daily charitable dole would be distributed to the needy. At some distance from the main buildings were the guest houses, where hospitality was dispensed on a gigantic scale to all the many travellers who claimed it. All comers were sure of a welcome, and even the criminal pursued by the law, or the avenger, might stay twenty-four hours, and no questions asked. At the head of the monastery was the abbot, who lived in a separate house similar to a large manor house. He was usually a peer of Parliament and one of the most powerful nobles in the realm. There were times when the abbot of Bury S. Edmunds administered justice over four or five of the Eastern counties. The abbot represented the abbey to the outside world. The internal affairs of the abbey were managed by the prior, assisted by several sub-priors.

The daily life of a well-ordered monastery was regular and punctual. By 6 a.m. the monk had to be in his place in chapel, where he said lauds and prime and heard mass. After this he attended the chapter, and afterwards, on ordinary days, partook of a light meal called the 'mixtum.' At 9 a.m. the office of terce was said, and after that the work of the day would go on till mid-day, when sext would be said and followed usually by dinner. On fast days, such as Wednesdays and Fridays, there would be no meal till afternoon at 3 p.m. During Lent there would be a more prolonged fast, till 5 or 6 p.m.—the hour of supper. After vespers at 6 p.m. the monastery gates would be closed. Then, after saying the office of com-

pline, the monks filed off to their dormitories, and the prior went round to see that each monk was duly in his cubicle. The night was divided into three nocturns, and a constant succession of psalms was chanted in chapel by relays of monks, so arranged that each monk spent two nocturns in bed and one in chapel.

Such, to put it briefly, was the normal life of the medieval monk. When we read the varying estimates of modern writers it is hard to form an opinion of the standard of comfort which they enjoyed. One type of writer speaks as if the life of the monk was one of fearful hardship, tedium and dullness, such as nothing but an insane fanaticism could support. Others speak of the monastic life of the Middle Ages as though it were a constant round of feasting and good fellowship, the fish on fast days being rather an improvement than otherwise in the daily fare. This is the popular estimate that finds expression in well-known novels and pictures. Both these estimates are about equidistant from the truth. Monastic life, judged by the standard of the times, was not a hard one. The food, except on fast days, was good and plentiful ; and the festivals of the Church were observed with much good cheer. The monastic life did not turn on the supposition that there is any merit in being miserable or any sin in being happy. The monk led a hard life at times simply for the sake of self-discipline, in order that his lower nature might yield undisputed obedience to the higher. Moreover, the ordinary life of the monk was far from dull. He had frequently to go on long journeys to transact business for the abbey ; he often took part in clearing the great forests in his neighbourhood and in building roads. The whole road system of the neighbourhood of Abingdon, for

instance, was the work of the abbey, and the massive masonry of two great causeways exists as an abiding memorial of the industry of the monks, whose great abbey has so largely disappeared. Furthermore, a monk would often find among his associates many who had played a great part in affairs before they exchanged the sword for the cowl. Again, visitors of all ranks—from the king downward—were constantly accepting hospitality from the guest house. Added to this were the lawsuits and disputes, culminating in pitched battles about fairs and markets and trading rights, which bulk so largely in many monastic chronicles, and which must have filled the monk's life with many exciting episodes.

(*c*) In the Dark Ages the general corruption and decadence of the Church was reflected in the laxness of monastic life, and the conviction grew upon the most earnest churchmen that the way of reform for the monasteries and for the whole of Christendom lay in the foundation of a monastic order following a stricter rule than the old Benedictine one. The history of the Church may be regarded as the history of a succession of spiritual revivals. It is significant of the individualism of modern times that each revival since the Reformation has led to the formation of a schismatic sect. It is significant of the communistic tendencies of the Middle Ages that each revival led to the formation of a religious order within the Church, and subject to the Church. After many attempts, the aims of reformers were realised in the foundation of the great Abbey of Cluny by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine, in 910. For two centuries and a half after its foundation Cluny was ruled by abbots of commanding ability and the most austere sanctity of life. Abbeys were founded all over Christendom to follow the

rule of Cluny, and to be subject to its abbot. Other abbeys already existent were placed under the same rule. Every Cluniac abbey was ruled by a prior, appointed by the Abbot of Cluny, and directly subordinate to him. At intervals representatives of all these dependent monasteries —even from distant lands like Scotland and Poland— met in chapter at Cluny to discuss the affairs of the order. Hitherto, all Benedictine abbeys had been independent, and united only by the observance of a common rule. The congregation of Cluny was a new departure. It was a great spiritual army under a single commander-in-chief. Its influence in the world was immense. All the highest aspirations of Eleventh Century man seemed to find their centre in the congregation of Cluny. It became a home of learning and a training ground for popes. Hildebrand himself is said to have come from its cloister, and it was the support of Cluny that enabled him to dominate Western Europe. The number of abbeys under the control of Cluny was immense. Lavisse and Rambaud (*Histoire Générale*, vol. ii.) put it at over two thousand. This is probably an over-statement and probably includes abbeys which followed the Cluniac rule without being members of the congregation. But according to the *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis* (Paris, 1614), there were as many as 825 abbeys that owed allegiance to the Abbey of Cluny. The chief [1] Cluniac foundation in England was S. Pancras at Lewes, founded by William, Earl of Warren, eleven years after the Conquest, and the Prior of S. Pancras usually held the position of vicar-general of the Abbot of Cluny for England and Scotland. During the century that followed the Conquest other great

[1] The first Cluniac house was Barnstaple, founded a little earlier than Lewes.

Cluniac houses grew up at Castleacre, Montacute, Northampton and Bermondsey, together with numerous smaller houses. Many of them were suppressed as 'alien priories' towards the end of the Fourteenth Century. Those that remained managed to free themselves from dependence on Cluny. At the time of the Dissolution there were thirty-two Cluniac houses in England. Under Peter the Venerable, who was abbot from 1122 to 1156, Cluny reached the zenith of its power and was second only to Rome as the chief centre of the Christian world.

(*d*) The end of the Eleventh Century saw the outburst of a religious and intellectual revival too powerful to be contained within the Cluniac order. It was one of those sudden and mysterious waves of enthusiasm that swept from time to time over the medieval world. It resulted in the foundation of a great number of new monastic orders, the rules and organisation of which were inspired to a significant extent by shortcomings of the Cluniacs. Two of these, owing to their great and abiding influence, demand our attention. The first in order of foundation is the Carthusian order, which was founded by S. Bruno of Rheims in 1084. S. Bruno, disgusted with the commonplace virtues of the existing monasteries, and with the worldliness of the Archbishop of Rheims, went with six companions to consult the Bishop of Grenoble on their design of living a stricter life of contemplation and prayer. The Bishop led them to a wild, desolate and romantic spot called Chartreuse—a name that has since become familiar to every country and language in Europe as the parent house of the Carthusian Priories. The foundation of the Carthusian order represents an attempt to go back behind S. Benedict of

Nursia to the very beginning of Christian monasticism. It combines the life of a community with that of a solitary. "They live," says S. Peter the Venerable, writing about fifty years after the foundation of the order, "in separate little houses like the ancient monks of Egypt, and they occupy themselves continually with reading, prayer, and the labour of their hands, especially the writing of books. They recite prayers for the minor canonical hours in their own dwellings, when warned by the bell of the church; but they all assemble in church for matins and vespers. On feast days they eat twice, and sing all the offices in church, and eat in the refectory." Their dress consisted of a shirt of horsehair next the skin, bound by a girdle, and an outer garment of coarse white cloth. Their austerities were severe in the extreme. To quote Peter the Venerable again: "They always eat bread of unbolted meal, and take so much water with their wine that it has hardly any flavour of wine left. They never eat meat whether in health or ill. They never buy fish, but they accept it if it is given them for charity. They eat cheese and eggs only on Sundays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays and Saturdays they eat cooked vegetables. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, they take only bread and water. They eat only once a day, save on the Octaves of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany and one or two other solemnities." The Carthusians are remarkable as the only order that never degenerated with the passage of time. It is claimed for it with truth that it has never been reformed because it has never been deformed. Within a century it had about 150 priories in various parts of Europe. The first house of the order in England was established in 1222 at Hinton, in Somersetshire, by

William Langesper. The chief house was the famous Charterhouse, near Smithfield, which afterwards offered such a heroic resistance to the spoliation of Henry VIII. At the time of the dissolution there were in all eight English Carthusian monasteries and about 100 members.

Of far greater power and influence in the world was the Cistercian order. This was founded in 1098 by S. Robert, Abbot of Molesme ; but it received its distinctive character and constitution from a great Englishman, S. Stephen Harding, and its power and popularity from the famous S. Bernard of the daughter house of Clairvaux. The Cistercian order represents an attempt to go back to the original rule of S. Benedict, which had been gradually obscured by later accretions—especially in connection with the Cluniac revival. Thus, for instance, the original rule of S. Benedict prescribed manual labour for all monks. But the Cluniacs spent so much time in worship and contemplation that no time was left for carrying out this precept. The Cistercian rule reduced the worship and contemplation so that all might work with their hands at agriculture and otherwise. The Cistercians were the Puritans of the Middle Ages. The Cluniacs had their churches adorned with jewelled crosses, pictures and plate of the most elaborate splendour and sacred vestments and chalices of the most precious materials. The Cistercians, on the contrary, revived the plainness of ornament of an earlier period. Their chasubles were only of linen, their chalices of silver-gilt instead of gold. Their church interiors were of a severely plain appearance, and their religious ceremonial of the simplest. But the very coarseness of the material of their robes and of their buildings led to a great taste for beauty of form. Their vestments were beautifully

shaped, and their churches are remarkable for their beauty of architecture. The Cistercians were not as a rule great scholars; at times they were inclined to disparage mere secular education; but they did great service to medieval Europe by their improvements of agriculture and cattle breeding, and by their reclaiming of fens and waste land. The custom of associating with their monasteries considerable bodies of lay brothers devoted to farming served to diffuse their superior knowledge among the peasantry of the neighbourhood. Within a century of its foundation the order embraced upwards of 800 abbeys scattered over Western Europe. The first Cistercian houses in England were founded at Waverley in Surrey, in 1129, and at Furness, by Henry I., in 1127. A mission sent by S. Bernard, founded Rievaulx Abbey in 1130, with the assistance of Walter of Espec, a devout and wealthy Yorkshire baron. In 1132 certain monks of S. Mary's, York, who wished to live under the Cistercian rule, founded the famous Abbey of Fountains. At about the same time Tintern and Whiteland were founded by the generosity of marcher lords. Houses of the Cistercian rule spread, especially in the devastated and thinly populated north of England, and in later ages derived great wealth from sheep farming. About 100 houses belonged to the Cistercians at the time of the dissolution; and theirs are the most beautiful monastic ruins in England to-day. These white monks, as they were often called from their white habits in contrast to the Benedictines or black monks, aroused the envy and dislike of seculars and lawyers. They were often charged by their enemies with avarice, legacy-hunting and hypocrisy. "They are proud of their pale faces," writes John of Salisbury, "and sighing is with

them a fine art ; at any moment they are prepared to shed a flood of tears. . . . They move at a snail's pace, uttering prayers the while. They cultivate a ragged and dirty appearance, humbling themselves that they may be exalted."

It is noticeable that all the religious orders that exercised a potent influence on English life originated in France. England itself only originated one order—that of Gilbert of Sempringham, the son of a Lincolnshire knight ; and even he had studied in the schools of France and drew his fervour from S. Bernard of Clairvaux. His first houses were founded for the benefit of pious women who desired to renounce the world but were prevented for one reason or another from joining houses of the older orders. To these were associated canons, and also lay brethren who did manual labour. The Gilbertines, as members of the order were called, had little influence out of England, but they acquired a great reputation for sanctity ; and when their founder died in 1189 there were 700 Gilbertine canons and 1500 sisters.

(*e*) At the time of the dissolution (1536) there were 645 monasteries in England and Wales, twenty-seven of which were abbeys ruled by a mitred abbot, who was a member of the House of Lords. The majority were either founded or already in existence in the Twelfth Century. Thus the monks, together with their servants, tenants and other dependants, must have formed a considerable proportion of the population. This becomes apparent when we remember that many considerable towns, such as Abingdon and Bury S. Edmunds, grew up for the sole purpose of ministering to the needs of great abbeys. It is not surprising, then, that the results for good and evil of monasticism on medieval England

are very considerable. On the bad side of the account comes first, the fact that no inconsiderable portion of the land and wealth and political influence of the country was transferred to corporations, subject to special law courts and a special law. Then, again, such a vast number of able-bodied men in the cloister must have resulted in a serious diminution of wealth production. It is true that monasteries were to some extent recruited from the leisured classes. But even so, for large numbers of the most capable and most cultivated men in the country to live a celibate life must, from the point of view of eugenics, have been harmful to the race. Moreover, many monasteries must have had an evil effect on the discipline of the Church in England, as they were often exempt from episcopal control and subject only to the Pope. For this reason, Englishmen became entangled in the endless strife between the 'seculars,' as non-monastic clergy were called, and 'regulars,' and also in that between the Papacy and the Empire. Again, the profuse and indiscriminate charity of the monasteries fostered idleness, poverty and dependence. It is not without significance that the countries of Europe to-day, where monasteries abound, are not the richest in this world's goods.

Thus, from the point of view of a narrow materialistic utilitarianism, it is possible to make out a powerful indictment against the monasteries; and such an indictment often has been made out. But there is another side to the picture, with which the average Englishman has been unfamiliar until quite recent times. Thus, from an economic point of view the monasteries were busy hives of industry. Founded, as they so often were, in desolate wastes, far from the haunts of men, they turned the

desert into a garden. They were ever clearing forests, draining fens and reclaiming wastes. Their energy in spreading improved methods of agriculture and cattle breeding have already been alluded to in connection with the Cistercian order. The finest and most delicate workmanship in metal and otherwise came from within monastic walls. More than this is the service of the monks to education. Their schools were almost the only ones of the 'dark ages,' and many a poor lad taken into a monastic school, grew up to take his place with the greatest nobles of the land. Many of the greatest books of the ancient world owe their preservation[1] to the monasteries. But for the monasteries these works would have perished, and many of the fountains of subsequent progress would have been dried up. Thus, for instance, Faricius, Abbot of Abingdon (c. 1100), was the most famous medical man of his day. He brought with him to Abingdon "multos libros de physica," and received rich gifts for the abbey from many, who, like Miles Crispin of Wallingford, had been cured of dangerous diseases by his skill. Finally, the monasteries bore constant witness to the existence of a life of self-discipline and self-sacrifice in the midst of a brutal and worldly age. Not a few of them owed their foundation to the fierce and bloody baronage of Stephen's reign. They are an abiding confession on the part of such men that there is a higher life beyond their ken, which they should promote in others even though they despaired of attaining it themselves.

[1] It is true that the monks made palimpsests of some ancient MSS. But their number is very small compared with that of those which they preserved for study. See Gasquet, *English Monastic Life* in "The Antiquary's Books" (Methuen & Co.).

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF CORPORATIONS—THE GILDS AND THE UNIVERSITIES

§ 1. Trade Gilds.
- (*a*) The Origin of Gilds.
- (*b*) The Merchant Gild.
- (*c*) Its Functions—External and Internal.
- (*d*) Craft Gilds.
- (*e*) Apprenticeship.
- (*f*) The Social and Religious Functions of Gilds.

§ 2. Universities.
- (*a*) The Beginnings of Universities.
- (*b*) The Origin of Oxford University.
- (*c*) Organisation.
- (*d*) Migrations of Students and the Origin of Cambridge University.
- (*e*) The Course of Study.
- (*f*) Nominalism and Realism.
- (*g*) The Students themselves—numbers—social caste—way of life.

§ 3. Conclusion.

§ 1. (*a*) The two centuries that followed the Norman Conquest saw a beginning of that activity, that has at last in these days shifted the centre of gravity of economic life from the country to the town. The increase of town life was rapid and remarkable. London, by the reign of John, had become powerful enough to take a great part in extorting Magna Carta, and the towns of Henry III. are of sufficient weight to attract the notice of Simon de

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Montfort, when he seeks to fill up the gaps in his Parliament, by summoning members from the chief cities and boroughs that supported him. The reasons for this growth of town life are manifold. First, the good order preserved by most of the post-Conquest kings could not fail to foster commerce. Henry of Huntingdon, while bitterly describing the exactions of the Conqueror, adds in spite of himself, "Yet he so firmly preserved the peace that a girl laden with gold could pass in safety from one end of England to the other." Secondly, the Norman Conquest brought over luxurious nobles, who were good for business. The nucleus of many a town probably lay in the multitude of craftsmen, who gathered together chiefly to minister to the previously-unheard-of luxuries of some great noble. Finally, the Crusades, stretching as they did over two centuries, and bringing into light distant lands that had previously lain in a very dark twilight, opened up all kinds of new trade routes for the adventurous merchant. The crusading hosts brought wealth to many a seaport town from which they embarked. Moreover, the Crusaders created a demand for money, such as had never been known since the days of Imperial Rome, and the sale of charters and trading rights by nobles who had taken the Cross gave a vast impetus to the growth of towns all over Western Europe. The great number of towns whose charters date from the reign of Richard I., *e.g.* Bedford and Bath, is significant of this.

In all this growth of town life the corporate spirit of medieval man finds one of its most characteristic and most interesting expressions—namely, the trade gilds. Now gilds of some sort must have existed in towns from a very early period. Gilds for the maintenance of the

peace and gilds for religious observances certainly existed in pre-Norman England.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suppose that in the case of some few English towns, gilds had a definite ancestry in those similar bodies that almost certainly existed when this country was a province of the Roman Empire. However this may be, the first Merchant Gild known to English history is mentioned in a charter to Burford in Oxfordshire, granted by Robert Fitz-Hamon between the years 1087 and 1100, and in the course of a few centuries afterwards there arise Merchant Gilds in every important town in England, except London, the Cinque Ports, Norwich, Exeter, Northampton and Colchester, and possibly a few others of ancient fame, which had reached an advanced stage of municipal development before the Conquest.

(*b*) A Merchant Gild consisted originally of practically all the responsible inhabitants of a town. The word 'merchant' in this expression must not deceive us into supposing that there was any distinction in early times between the maker and the seller of commodities, any more than the word 'trade' in the expression Trades Union implies that its members are engaged in salesmanship. Both functions were performed by the same man, and the shop was also a workshop. The growth of a special class of men, who devoted all their energies to selling, was very slow and incomplete in the Middle Ages. The average townsman at the beginning of our period was often manufacturer, capitalist, labourer and salesman, all in one. Moreover, where there was a special merchant class, there was, as a rule, no superiority in wealth or status attached to it. The skilled artisan, who could produce goods of finer quality than his fellows,

throve far more than the merchant who, considering his risks and restrictions, made, as a rule, fairly small profits.[1]

At the head of the gild was usually an elected Alderman, who presided at meetings of the craftsmen and was responsible for the care of its property and the enforcement of its regulations. He was usually assisted by two or sometimes by four stewards, ' skevins ' or wardens, as they were variously called in different boroughs, and by a host of other elected officials, whose names are some indication of their respective functions. Thus, there were often ale-tasters, cup-bearers, clerks, treasurers, sergeants, bailiffs, etc., who took an important part in the activities of their gild. The meetings of the Merchant Gild took place in some towns twice a year, in others four times, in others more frequently. At these ' morning talks,' as they were often called, the most important business of the society was transacted. New members were admitted, punishment was inflicted for breaches of statute, and new ordinances were made. This business was usually followed by merrymaking and feasting on a prodigious scale. Thus, for instance, among the brethren of Winchester, ' to drink the Gild Merchant ' seems to have been the usual expression for holding a meeting of the society.

(*c*) The functions of the Merchant Gild may be conveniently considered from two points of view : first, the external functions of securing the interests of the gild from without ; and, secondly, the internal functions concerned with the individual interests of each member of the gild. The external functions are the more prominent ones in early times, and they are concerned to a large

[1] See Meredith, *Economic History* (Isaac Pitman & Sons).

extent with the lord in whose manor the town grew up. At first the townspeople, like those of Coventry in the legend of Lady Godiva, would be in the same relation to their lord as were the villagers of an ordinary village. Thus, for instance, the city of Hereford is recorded in Domesday Book as liable to the following dues and services, of very much the same kind as those paid by villagers, except that military service is also given. "Within the wall of the city each whole burgage rendered 7½d. and 4d. for the hire of horses, and on three days in August reaped at Marden, and (its tenant) was present on one day for gathering the hay where the sheriff pleased. He who had a horse proceeded three times a year with the sheriff to the pleas and to the hundred court of Wormelow." This was the site of a hundred court, about six miles south of Hereford, in the midst of a lawless district. The citizens of Hereford had, therefore, to go on horseback to protect the sheriff. "When the king was pursuing the chase, from each house according to custom went one man to the beating in the wood. Other men, who had not whole burgages, provided guards for the hall when the king was in the city."

Gradually citizens would buy exemptions and privileges in the form of charters from the lord; and this buying was usually done by the Merchant Gild. In theory a Merchant Gild had no right to exist without a charter. But in actual fact it was sometimes the Merchant Gild that called the charter into existence, and sometimes the charter that called the Merchant Gild into existence. The privileges most sought after and most frequently embodied in a charter were the right of electing their own officers and magistrates, and of making their own trade regulations; the right of holding a court,

so that a burgess should not be impleaded outside the walls ; the right of paying their dues and taxes in a lump sum, so that the dreaded sheriff would no longer have them in his power ; the right of market or fair and trading rights, such as freedom from toll in other towns ; the right to buy and sell in their own town, and to exclude all not of the gild from selling retail there. Many charters also contained a privilege fraught with great social significance—that a serf who had spent a year and a day within the town walls could not be reclaimed by his lord. This deprived neighbouring nobles of a fruitful excuse for interfering in the internal affairs of towns, and gave the towns a supply of labour in a day when population was too small for prosperity.

The privileges most sought after will be best understood by glancing at a typical charter, such as an important gild was accustomed to buy. Thus, for instance, the charter granted to Oxford by Henry II., runs as follows :—

" Know ye that I have granted and confirmed to my citizens of Oxford all their liberties and customs, laws and exemptions, which they had in the time of King Henry, my grandfather, namely their Merchant Gild with all their liberties and customs on lands, islands, pastures and all their appurtenances, so that no one who does not belong to that gild shall trade in the city or in the suburbs, except as he was accustomed to do in the time of King Henry, my grandfather. Besides, I have conceded and confirmed to them that they shall be free from toll and passage (*i.e.* passage money levied on merchants visiting markets and fairs) and all customs throughout England and Normandy, by land and water and seashore, ' biland and bistrand ' ; and they shall have

all customs and liberties and laws which they have in common with my citizens of London," etc.

In the custumal of Preston, confirmed by Edward III., is the privilege found in almost the same words in the charters of many other towns, especially those in Wales or on the Welsh border, *e.g.* Beaumaris, Builth, Hope, Welshpool. "If any person's villein remain in the town, and hold land in it, and be in the said gild and hanse, and scot and lot (*i.e.* payment of taxes, dues, etc.) a year and a day without being claimed, then he can not be reclaimed by his lord, but may remain free in the said town."

The growth of a town depended very much on the ease with which rights such as these could be bought. That is why it is impossible to assign even the most approximate dates to stages in the development of English towns. One town at any given time might be at a stage which a neighbouring town had passed through a century or more before. Thus, for instance, S. Albans in the Fifteenth Century was not so far advanced in its privileges as London had been at the time of the Conquest. Much depended on the status of the lord of the manor. Generally speaking, the more important the lord the easier it was to buy privileges. The easiest of all to buy from was the king. In those days of faulty account keeping and faulty, not to say dishonest, administration, and imperfect geographical knowledge, the king, having so many hundreds of manors, must frequently have lost land and rights of great value without knowing it. So it would pay him to get a lump sum, as the proverbial bird in hand, for rights which he could not personally superintend. Moreover, the king, whoever he might be, was perennially short of money ; and the king's necessity

was the town's opportunity. Hence it is that the vast majority of towns that rose to importance in the Middle Ages were on the king's demesne. If the lord of the manor were a large landowner, bargaining would still be easy. But if he were a small one with only a few manors and, therefore, able personally to supervise his rights in the town, he would be able to exact them to the uttermost farthing, and would sell them far less willingly. It was here that the Crusades and the accompanying need for ready money came to the rescue. The most difficult of all manorial lords to buy charters from were the monasteries. Their business methods were far superior to those of the laity. They recorded their rights with the utmost care ; and turned them to the fullest possible advantage. Hence there was the greatest reluctance on their part to sell. Jocelyn de Brakelond records that when the famous Abbot Sampson granted a charter to the men of Bury S. Edmunds, the indignation of the monks knew no bounds, and the sub-prior anrgily reproached him with the words : " He, Abbot Ording, who lies there, would not have done such a thing for five hundred marks of silver." Very often it was the need of money to build a great abbey church that at last enabled the townsfolk to buy a charter. But when they did get one it was usually far more grudging and circumspect in its terms than charters such as king or great noble was accustomed to accord. The struggles of such towns as Abingdon, Bury S. Edmunds and S. Albans, against their abbeys was a long and bitter one.

Almost as important as bargaining with the lord of the manor was self-protection from the Merchant Gilds of other towns, whether subject to the English king or some foreign prince. For, like the ecclesiastical

bodies that we considered in the last chapter, the chartered towns of Western Europe cut across all national or dynastic divisions. A man of York was as much a 'foreigner' in Winchester as in Bruges; and towns made treaties and alliances, and brought economic pressure to bear on one another, much as the independent states of Europe do nowadays. Thus, if a merchant were imprisoned in a 'foreign' town the Merchant Gild of his own town would take steps to secure his release. If a merchant from a 'foreign' town failed to pay a debt, the goods of other merchants from the same town would be seized to make good the debt. This right of 'withernam,' as distraining on the fellow-townsmen of defaulting debtors was called, was exercised in the city of London early in the Twelfth Century, and was rapidly granted in charters or usurped by the Merchant Gilds of other towns. The defaulting debtor who had caused his fellow merchants to lose their goods was, of course, punished or compelled to make reparation by his own community. Thus, at Yarmouth, a debtor who refused satisfaction to those distrained on his account was expelled from the gild. At Leicester it was the custom to lock him out of his own house till satisfaction was made. At Hereford a debtor unable to make reparation was imprisoned. The rights granted to the gild of one town often collided with the rights of another. Thus, many towns, such, for instance, as Wallingford, were granted immunity from toll "wherever they go trading throughout the whole land of England and Normandy, Aquitaine and Anjou." At the same time, many towns were granted the right to levy toll on *all* not of their own Merchant Gild. Which grant was to hold good, the immunity from toll of Wallingford, or the right of other towns to levy toll on all

merchants of 'foreign' towns—including Wallingford? Such questions were of frequent occurrence. They were settled sometimes, after an appeal to the king, by a jury of inquisition; but more often they were settled as disputes between independent nations are now settled—by economic pressure, reprisals, arbitration, treaties, and even by pitched battles. Thus, for instance, in 1265, the citizens of Winchester and the burgesses of Southampton agreed to a composition that neither should exact toll from the other. Again, in 1286, Norwich made a commercial treaty with the Continental towns of Amiens, Corbeil and Nesle, enabling their merchants to dwell in Norwich as long as they pleased and to sell their goods freely.

The internal functions of the Merchant Gild are of great interest in view of modern labour conditions. Many have fancied that they have seen in them the solution of modern troubles, because the Merchant Gild represents the principle of co-operation between those three parties, the capitalist, the labourer and the consumer, whose interests to-day are taken for granted to be so divergent. The Merchant Gild, at the best, saw to it that the workman did good work with good material. A bad workman was punished severely by fine or expulsion for injuring the good name of the town. It also saw to it that the workman was paid a sufficient wage to maintain him in that standard of comfort which was considered appropriate to his status. For, according to the medieval mind, every man had his proper status, and to allow a man's standard of comfort to fall below or rise above[1] what was due to that status was an act of

[1] For this reason many gilds forbade members to work by candle light. It was not because work done by poor artificial

injustice. Finally, the Merchant Gild saw to it that the employer received a fair profit on his goods, and that the buyer received fair value for his money. Thus, striking, profiteering and sweating were equally ruled out by communities which saw deep enough to perceive that all their interests were really identical. This is a very attractive picture, but when it is examined in the cold light of history several defects are observed. For instance, it is hardly correct to speak of capital and labour in the early Middle Ages. They were to a large extent identical at first. The shopkeeper made most of his goods himself with the help of his family. Also, the large amount of fraud and profiteering we find mentioned in medieval municipal records, shows that the Merchant Gild did not work so smoothly in actual fact as in the imagination of Twentieth Century idealists. Moreover, the gild only achieved what measure of success it did, by keeping outsiders from enjoying their privileges of trade. The history of many of the Merchant Gilds, like that of modern Trade Unions, is the gradual narrowing of what was once an all-embracing democracy into a narrow and selfish oligarchy, chiefly interested in keeping what they have got for themselves. As time goes on, it becomes increasingly difficult for an outsider to become a member of the Merchant Gild. It is, as we have seen, difficult to assign any date to the Merchant Gild, because towns developed with such unequal speed. But the Thirteenth Century may be taken, not without reservations, as the 'floruit' of the Merchant Gild.

(*d*) In later medieval England, after the Thirteenth

light would be of poor quality, so much as because it was regarded as unjust for a man to do more work, and thus get richer, than his fellows.

Century, the Merchant Gild very rapidly decays. It does not die out, but its animation is suspended. The cause of this decay must next claim our attention. It is simply this, that in the course of social evolution the functions of the Merchant Gild gradually fell to other bodies which specialised each in its own department. It is the usual story of evolution from the simple to the more complex. The external duties of the Merchant Gild gradually fall to the lot of the Town Council, and they do so without much friction, for the reason that, as a rule, the leading members of the Merchant Gild would also be the leading members of the Town Council. It has been shown that the two bodies were not identical. For instance, a burgess of another town often found it convenient to purchase membership of a Merchant Gild; whereas, only one who lived in a town could be a member of the Town Council. But the two bodies had sufficient identity for the duties of the one to pass quite easily to the other.

The internal functions of the Merchant Gild fell to a number of bodies called Craft Gilds. Why? The older historians have seen in this change a successful struggle of labour against capital; and in some cases they may be right. Such things happened quite frequently in Continental towns. But in England this was the exception, and not the rule. The word merchant, as we have seen, is not in the Middle Ages synonymous with capitalist, and members of the Craft Gilds were not always poor men. What usually happened in England was this: that the increase in the number of trades and in the expert skill of the manufacturers, made it impossible for one Merchant Gild adequately to regulate and to inspect them all. A time was bound to come when a

particular industry became so complex that only those engaged in it possessed the expert knowledge sufficient to do so. When this time came the Town Council or Merchant Gild requested those engaged in the industry to form themselves into a Craft Gild. Thus, in the town of Leicester, at the end of Edward III.'s reign, there were many complaints that the weavers did poor work and used rotten yarn. At last two weavers were seized and punished by the mayor with the approval of the other weavers. The mayor next chose two of the best weavers ' to search and visit ' all their fellow craftsmen. These two became wardens of the Weavers' Craft Gild, which thus had its beginning and rapidly organised itself. This is a typical instance of the way in which Craft Gilds began in England. From time to time the men of various trades would go to the council and ask permission to form themselves into a gild. Once formed into a gild they would draw up rules for the regulation of their craft.

(*e*) In order to maintain the due standard of comfort, as well as of skill, by eliminating competition, they would ordain that none might engage in their craft without serving a period of apprenticeship as pupil of a master craftsman of the gild. His period of apprenticeship was very often of seven years' duration. During this time he was fed, clothed, housed and ' chastised duly '—as it is often expressed in many an apprentice's indenture—by the master and his wife. When he had served his seven years he would be installed with much ceremonial as a master craftsman, and might set up in business for himself. If he was a poor man, he might not be able to afford to set up in business at once. The fees in many Craft Gilds were heavy. House and furniture and tools

were expensive. So many a craftsman, who had duly served his apprenticeship, had to work for some years as a labourer or 'journeyman,' as he would be called, to another craftsman till he could save up enough money to set up in business for himself. In the last phase of the Middle Ages, as we shall see anon, the Craft Gilds became narrow and exclusive, so that many journeymen never became anything more than journeymen. But in the earlier period the workman or apprentice was of equal social status with the master, and looked forward to becoming a master himself in due time. Thus, there were not the modern conditions of a class of employers, who have always been employers, and another class of employees of a totally different social status, who would always be mere employees.

(*f*) We have spoken hitherto of gilds in their economic functions. It would be impossible to understand town life in the Middle Ages without some knowledge of their other functions. They were, in the first place, friendly societies, looking after all brethren in poverty or sickness, giving them decent burial, and providing for the dependants of dead brethren. Thus, the rules of the Norwich Taylors Gild provide that: "Whoso fall into mischief, poverty, crooked, blind, by the grace of God's sending (unless he be proved a thief), he shall have 7d. a week of the brethren and sisters to help him." Or, again, the Craft Gild of Berwick-on-Tweed, in 1283, enacts as follows: "If any brother die, leaving a daughter true and worthy and of good repute but undowered, the gild shall find her a dower, either on marriage or on going into a religious house. Whoever dies without leaving means enough to pay for becoming burial rites, shall be buried at the cost of the gild." Even more important still was

the religious aspect of the gild. They probably originated, as we have seen, as religious bodies, and to an observer in the Middle Ages the most prominent of all their functions might well appear to be their religious ones. Many a noble town church owes its existence to their piety; and, at least, one day in each year was usually set apart as a religious festival by each gild. Provisions for the due observance of this loom very large in their regulations. Thus, the Gild of S. Mary Beverley enacts as follows, in 1355: "Every year on the feast of the Purification of Blessed Mary, all the brethren and sisters shall meet together in a fit and appointed place, away from the church, and there one of the gild shall be clad in comely fashion as a queen, like to the Glorious Virgin Mary, having what may seem a son in her arms; and two others shall be clad like to Joseph and Simeon; and two shall go as angels, carrying a candle bearer, on which shall be twenty-four thick wax lights. With these and other great lights borne before them, and with much music and gladness, the pageant Virgin with her son and Joseph and Simeon, shall go in procession to church. And all the sisters of the gild shall follow the Virgin; and afterwards all the brethren; and each of them shall carry a wax light weighing half a pound. And they shall go two and two, slowly pacing to the church; and when they have got there, the pageant Virgin shall offer her son to Simeon at the high altar; and all the sisters and brethren shall offer their wax lights, together with a penny each. All this having been solemnly done, they shall go home again with gladness. And any brother or sister who does not come, unless good cause for staying away be shown, shall pay half a pound of wax to the gild. On the same day after dinner, the

brethren and sisters shall meet together, and shall eat bread and cheese and drink ale, rejoicing in the Lord, in praise of the glorious Virgin Mary." [1]

§ 2. (*a*) There is one type of gild of more abiding influence than those engaged in trade. It is those gilds of teachers and scholars, which have come to be known in later ages as universities, and which are one of the greatest legacies of the Middle Ages to modern civilisation. It is to them that we must devote our attention for the remainder of this chapter. In the Dark Ages that followed upon the disintegration of the Roman Empire, such learning as survived in Western Europe was preserved chiefly in the monasteries. A certain minimum of learning was necessary for the work of the Church. The clergy could not use their service books, and new service books could not be made, without some little education. It was owing to such needs as these that schools grew up round most of the great monasteries and cathedral churches; and the efforts of such enlightened rulers as Charlemagne and our own King Alfred, were directed with success to enlarging the number and scope of these schools. In the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries, the religious revival which found expression in Cluny was followed by an intellectual revival. This probably had its origin in the south of Italy, which came in contact with the higher civilisation of the Greek Empire and of the Mohammedans, and which had probably preserved something of the learning of classical times. By the early Twelfth Century we find that this renaissance had outgrown the schools of the Dark Ages, and found expression in certain corporations of teachers

[1] For this and similar documents, see Turrall, *Illustrations of British History* (Oxford University Press).

and scholars called a 'studium' or 'studium generale,' and only in later times called a university—a word which originally meant merely a corporation of any kind. These studia were of two kinds. The southern studia, such as Bologna, were corporations of students, who ruled their masters and legislated for themselves. The northern studia, the earliest and most important of which was Paris, were corporations of masters, who ruled their pupils and legislated for them. This northern type was the true gild organised on the lines of the Craft Gild. The student served an apprenticeship of seven years and then was admitted to the ranks of the Masters of Arts, and became a member of the governing body of the university and had the right to take apprentices of his own. The elder apprentices, who had not yet qualified for the mastership, were Bachelors of Arts. The origin of all this lay in the custom of the cathedral schools in the Dark Ages. At first it was the duty of the archdeacon or chancellor to teach the boys himself. Later on, when these officials became dignitaries of too great eminence to condescend to become mere schoolmasters, they would appoint some well-instructed person to do this work, and so give him a licence to teach in their school. In some of the more famous schools this licence to teach would be difficult to obtain, and would be recognised everywhere as a guarantee of the holder's learning and ability. This licence to teach is the origin of the university degree. Owing to the eminence of several of its teachers, such as William of Champeaux, Abelard and Peter Lombard, and to its growing political importance, Paris in the Twelfth Century had schools of unusually high reputation, and the licence to teach in the Paris schools became everywhere a recognised

qualification. The development of Bologna, the earliest of the family of southern universities was similar. By the middle of the Twelfth Century, the schools of Paris and Bologna were known as 'studia generalia'—places attended by scholars from all parts—the medieval expression for a university.

(*b*) The origin of the earliest and greatest English university is even more obscure than that of Paris. The claim that Oxford University was founded by Alfred the Great has for nearly a century been treated with derision, as derived from a spurious passage in Asser's *Life of King Alfred*. None the less the claim that Oxford was a place of learning from very early times cannot be disproved. Theobald Stampensis taught at Oxford prior to the year 1117, as is shown by a letter of his to Faricius, Abbot of Abingdon, who ruled that monastery from 1101 to 1117. Also, an anonymous answer to a tractate of Theobald's against monasticism, implies that he taught sixty to a hundred clerks, more or less, at Oxford. Then, again, the chronicle of Oseney Abbey, near Oxford, states that a famous theologian, named Robert Pulein, lectured on the Scriptures at Oxford in 1133. The statement that the famous Lombard Jurist, Vacarius, the first teacher of Civil Law in England, lectured at Oxford in 1149, is open to some doubt. However, the above instances prove beyond question that Oxford was an important place of learning at the very beginning of the Twelfth Century. It is an argument from silence of the most unsound kind to say that it could not have been so before the Twelfth Century. The right thing to do is frankly to confess our ignorance as to how and when our great university began. On the other hand, an important place of learning, as we have called Twelfth Century Oxford, is not

necessarily a 'studium generale.' It requires more than one master at a time and more than sixty or a hundred clerks to make it so. Hence it is generally agreed

The 'Bocardo' or North Gate of Oxford, as it existed prior to 1771. The tower is that of S. Michael's Church. It is early Norman, the battlements being a later addition which have since been removed. The dedication to the Archangel Michael was common in the case of churches, the towers of which formed part of the defences of a walled town.

The picture is reproduced from an eighteenth century print.

amongst modern scholars that Oxford first became recognised as a studium generale in consequence of a migration thither of students from Paris about the year 1167. Henry II.'s quarrel with Becket, which we have described in a previous chapter, led to strained relations with France. Consequently, sometime between 1165

and 1167, the French king expelled alien clerks from Paris University. At about the same time Henry II. recalled all English students studying at Paris. There is no direct evidence that the expelled and recalled clerks of Paris migrated to Oxford; but it is clear that very soon after 1167 Oxford is mentioned very frequently as a full-fledged studium generale. Thus, for instance, the Welsh traveller and historian, Giraldus Cambrensis, visited Oxford in 1184 or 1185 to read his book on the "Topography of Ireland" before the assembled masters and scholars. "In course of time when the work was completed and corrected, desiring not to hide his candle under a bushel but to place it on a candlestick so that it might give light, he resolved to read his work at Oxford, where the clergy in England chiefly flourished and excelled in clerkship, before that great audience." (*Giraldus Cambrensis*, Ed. Brewer, i. f. 72.) He goes on to narrate how he entertained on a magnificent scale in his hostel, among others, all the doctors of the different faculties, thus making it quite clear that here was no mere school, however eminent, but a great and flourishing university. From this time onward allusions multiply. So we may conclude that Oxford was a place of learning from an indefinitely early time; but it probably became a university only about the year 1167, as a consequence of the migration of a considerable portion of the University of Paris.

This conclusion is very greatly confirmed by a study of the ancient constitution of the University of Oxford, which is manifestly modelled upon that of Paris.

(*c*) In its earliest days there was extremely little organisation. The students lived in their own hired lodgings and gathered round those teachers whom they

liked best. Even when colleges began to be founded at the end of the Twelfth Century the more aristocratic students generally remained non-collegiate. The masters, acting together, admitted students to the licence to teach, probably at first on their own authority or on that of the Archdeacon of Oxford. One of the reasons, which probably accounts for the choice of Oxford as a site for a university, was the fact that it had no great monastery, and was as far distant as possible from a cathedral city. The Diocese of Lincoln was then about the largest in England, and Oxford was about as far from Lincoln as any town in the diocese could be. Had the university been founded near a great cathedral or monastery, it would have come under strict ecclesiastical control, as did the University of Paris. As it was, Oxford University enjoyed a unique degree of liberty. It gradually reduced the flourishing town to a complete subjection, from which it did not emerge till the beginning of the last century. Also, the chancellor first appointed by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1214 soon became a representative of the university rather than of any external authority. Thus, Oxford had none of those quarrels with its chancellor which disturbed the University of Paris for several centuries. The Chancellor of Oxford University was its head and champion against all aggressors. At first Oxford students were divided into two nations in imitation of the four nations of Paris. The Southern Nation consisted of English, south of the Trent, together with Irish and Welsh. The Northern included English from the north of the Trent, and the Scottish. These nations were abolished after a great faction fight between them in 1274, but the two Proctors (*i.e.* Procurators)—heads originally of the nations—have survived.

(*d*) The early universities had little or no permanent buildings. The students lived in lodgings or clubbed together to rent a hall, and the masters lectured mostly in hired rooms. Hence the medieval university was not tied to any one town. Should the townspeople or others prove oppressive they could always migrate to another town. Oxford itself, as we have seen, resulted to some extent from a migration from Paris; and during the course of the Thirteenth Century Oxford students migrated to many towns in England. One migration to Salisbury set up a university there for a whole generation. Other migrations brought learned bodies to Northampton and Stamford. It seemed at one time as if England were destined to have several ancient universities instead of only two. However, the only permanent result of these migrations was the University of Cambridge. During his quarrel with the Pope in 1209, King John outlawed the clergy, and the townspeople of Oxford took advantage of this to attack the university. Hence a migration to Cambridge, which is the origin of the university there. No doubt there were traditions of learning already in existence at Cambridge; but the legends of a foundation of the university by King Arthur, or by an eponymous Spanish Prince Cantaber, are simply the fruits of Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century imagination. Cambridge in the Middle Ages was never a university of first-rate size or importance. The best of its scholars often gained permission to study in the greater University of Oxford, and it seems impossible to find an instance of any eminent man, or even of any prominent ecclesiastic, who was educated at Cambridge during the Middle Ages. It was only after the time of Wycliffe, when timid parents feared to send their sons to so heresy-infected an

atmosphere as Oxford, that Cambridge grew to anything like equality with her ancient sister.

The possibility of migrations only ceased when colleges began to be established at Oxford in the latter half of the Thirteenth Century. They originated chiefly in a secular attempt to imitate the methodical life of the friars. But it must be remembered that the vast majority of the students of Oxford throughout the Middle Ages remained non-collegiate. Only a very small minority could be accommodated in the four colleges of the Thirteenth Century, or even in the nine of the Fourteenth, each with an average number of less than forty apiece.

(*e*) The course of study at the medieval university always strikes a modern student with astonishment at its great length. The course in arts lasted seven years. After four years study and the performance of various exercises, the student was given by the Chancellor a licence "to lecture on any book in the faculty of arts." After this he was known as a Bachelor of Arts. After three years more study and exercises successfully accomplished, the bachelor became a Master of Arts; and gave a great feast to celebrate his admission to the Gild of Masters. He became thenceforth part of the teaching staff of the university. His position was analogous to that of one who had served his apprenticeship in a trade gild and become a full-fledged member of the gild. But a degree in arts was looked upon only as the first step in a scholar's career. There were the higher faculties of theology, law and medicine, to one of which the Master of Arts might now devote himself. It required seven years more work in the faculty of theology for the Master of Arts to become a Bachelor of Divinity, and two

more years to become a Doctor of that faculty. Thus, in all, a student took some sixteen years of study at the university to become a Doctor of Divinity. The Doctorate in the faculties of civil law, canon law or medicine required an almost equally large slice out of a man's lifetime to achieve. Many students, of course, never got as far even as the master's degree in arts. None the less, these immensely long courses in the higher faculties are a remarkable testimony to the single-minded enthusiasm for learning for its own sake that caused large bodies of men in the Middle Ages to devote themselves in their poverty to a whole life of study with little hope of worldly reward. Later, the universities became a pathway for ambition, and the study of law especially was the stepping-stone to power, but in the Eleventh Century it was not so.

The subjects of the arts course were the mystic number, seven. Three subjects of a more elementary kind, grammar, rhetoric and logic, were known as the 'trivium'; and four more advanced subjects, arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy, formed the 'quadrivium.' Grammar and rhetoric included a certain amount of literature, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Virgil; but looking merely at the list of subjects, one might easily come to the conclusion that studies of a mathematical kind preponderated in the arts course. Logic, however, which included philosophy, especially metaphysics, was the great field of intellectual activity.

(*f*) Much of the brain of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries was taken up with logic as applied to the Christian Religion. This Scholasticism, which was afterwards held up to scorn and ridicule by the scholars of the

Renaissance, was a real and valuable attempt to rationalise some of the greatest problems that can occupy the human mind. The fact that these discussions are encased in a hard shell of formalism and barbarous nomenclature, has blinded many modern scholars to the boldness and originality and intellectual freedom of many of the great schoolmen. The great subject of discussion was the nature of 'universals,' that is to say, of the qualities which may be predicated of more than one individual. Thus, for instance, a particular man, sheep, piece of paper and stone are all of them white. They are all belonging to a class having a universal called 'whiteness.' What is the nature of this 'whiteness'? Does 'whiteness' really exist of itself quite apart from all individuals which are white? Or does it only exist in each individual thing that is white and nowhere else, except in the mind of the classifier? Those who considered that universals had a real existence were known as *realists*, and those who considered that they were mere names attached by the mind were the *nominalists*. It should be noted in passing that the modern use of the term realist to mean one who looks at material things as they outwardly appear to be, is almost diametrically opposed to the medieval use of the term.

Now it seems at first sight absurd for scholars to spend two or three centuries writing, disputing and fighting about such an utterly abstract question, and one so remote from the living interests of mankind. But the absurdity evaporates when we realise that the difference between nominalists and realist was merely the outward sign of much deeper differences on matters of more living import. The realist was a mystic, a spiritual heir of the Platonic doctrine, that everything on earth was

a faulty imitation of its perfect archetype in Heaven. He stood for the conviction that material things veil some deeper meaning than outwardly appears, and that man's mind is something greater, deeper and more wonderful than we know, that

> "Not in utter nakedness
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home."

The nominalist stood for reason and research and materialism. He maintained that men should examine words and arguments, and so not be the slaves of formulas and catch phrases. He was the spiritual heir of Aristotle and the pioneer of modern scientific research which, instead of taking things for granted on the authority of antiquity, collects evidence, experiments, and treats human reason as supreme. The nominalist and the realist represent the two extremes between which the pendulum of human thought has been oscillating to and fro ever since men first began to think. Both were right and both were wrong. At first, in the early Middle Ages, the realists held the field. Gradually, with the intellectual revival of the Twelfth Century and the increasing knowledge of Aristotle's works, nominalism asserted itself, and in the great thinkers of the Thirteenth Century both parties to the controversy adopted a certain amount of realism and of nominalism in varying degrees. Like political parties in Nineteenth Century England, their views tended to approximate, though their mutual antagonism remained.

(*g*) It remains to point out a few of the most outstanding features of life in a medieval university. First, as regards numbers, there was a very prevalent

idea in the later Middle Ages that Oxford had in earlier days had an immense number of students. Thus, for instance, Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, writing in the latter half of the Thirteenth Century about the evil influence of the friars, says, that though there had formerly been 30,000 students at Oxford their numbers had now sunk to 6000. Wycliffe, writing about twenty years later, puts the former number at 60,000 and the number in his own day at 3000. Also, in earlier times, Rishanger in his " Chronicon " estimates that there were 15,000 students in 1264 with their names on the masters' roll. Now there can be no doubt that the facility with which students migrated from one university to another in the early Middle Ages caused the numbers at Oxford to fluctuate enormously in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. But medieval writers rejoiced in great figures, and a number of lines of argument converge to show that 3000 is probably the highest number for the university at any period, and that numbers declined to about half this amount during the course of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

A student usually went up to the university between thirteen and sixteen years of age. This did not mean that he was a mere schoolboy. People aged much more rapidly in the Middle Ages. Men often occupied responsible positions in the state or the army before they were sixteen. There was no entrance examination to the university. But it was essential that the freshman should be acquainted with Latin, which was then a living language, written and spoken by all educated men throughout Western Europe. All the lectures would be given in Latin, and students were expected to converse in Latin except at times of special indulgence. Also, the

cosmopolitan character even of Oxford, and the fact that the language of one part of England was almost unintelligible in another would make the universal language an absolute necessity. The language would be acquired by children either in the grammar schools, with which each university was usually well supplied, or more often in the schools connected with the cathedral or monastery in their native district. In remote quarters, children were taught the rudiments of Latin from the Psalter by the parish priest.

In the ordinary schools the method of teaching was not unlike that of fairly modern times. First, grammar was taught from Donatus' *Grammar*, then the Latin Psalms were learned. Then the master would construe Cato or Ovid or Virgil, while his class followed in the Latin. After he had construed a paragraph he would call upon his pupils to do the same. There being no school dictionaries, the children could not be set to construe for themselves until the master had first construed the passage for them himself.

On passing from school to university, the schoolboy became a man of the utmost independence and free of almost all discipline. It was not till after the establishment of colleges in the latter part of the Thirteenth Century that his liberty or licence came to be curtailed to any marked degree. As soon as he was received into the university, he was recognised as a clericus or clerk, and a recipient of all the privileges and 'benefit' of clergy. Though he was not even admitted into minor orders, he was none the less marked out by his tonsure and by his dress as clergy. He could only lose his clerical status by getting married. Apart from this disability, he had all the habits of a layman.

The social caste of university students has been a subject of much misconception. Because we frequently hear of students begging their way to Oxford, or being given a licence to beg from the Chancellor, or being helped out of the University Chest, or doing menial services in hall, it is frequently assumed that they were mostly of the poorest classes. This is totally to misunderstand the Middle Ages. Begging was a perfectly respectable thing in the days of the friars. As Dean Rashdall has pointed out: "Many a man who would have been ashamed to dig was not ashamed to beg." Moreover, menial service at table involved little social inferiority in an age when the sons of the greatest nobles in the land were sent out to do menial services as pages and squires to other nobles. Moreover, in those days of poor communications and an inadequate banking system, the failure of supplies from home might reduce a comparatively wealthy student to temporary destitution. The one type of man not usually found at the university was the poorest. Those who were unfree were forbidden to educate their sons at all. Every other class of society was represented there, from the scion of some princely house, who lived in a hostel of his own, surrounded by his servants, chaplains, tutors, and companions, down to the son of the poor tradesman or artisan.

The day's work began early at the university, as everywhere else in the Middle Ages, owing to the great expense of artificial light. Most of the lectures took place between six and ten in the morning. Dinner would be about eleven and supper at five. Games and amusements of almost every kind seem to have been frowned at by those in authority. Even chess was classed by William de Wykeham among "noxious, inordinate and

unhonest games." Life was relieved of its tedium, not by games, but by fierce fights, whether between town and gown or university factions, or between the university and some ecclesiastical authority, episcopal or papal. The annals of the medieval universities are full of pitched battles of an extremely bloodthirsty and ferocious nature, in which learned doctors of Divinity were not ashamed to take a prominent part.

§ 3. From our study of the Church, the monasteries, the trade gilds and universities of the Middle Ages, one great fact should emerge, viz. that medieval society was a vast and elaborate system of more or less self-governing democratic brotherhoods. There is, first of all, the great all-embracing brotherhood of the Catholic Church, within the pale of which all the social distinctions of the secular world disappeared. It was often influenced by mighty princes; but its democratic constitution was a real thing. Thus, for instance, some of the Popes of this period were of the humblest origin, like Nicholas Breakspere, the son of a Hertfordshire peasant who, as Pope Adrian IV., became the most powerful man in the world. Within the Church were those smaller democratic brotherhoods, the monasteries. Sometimes, it is true, a king would abuse his power by forcing the monks to elect a creature of his own as abbot; but more often the monks chose one of their own number, as in Jocelyn de Brakelond's vivid narration of the election of Sampson as Abbot of Bury S. Edmunds. Thus a poor man, who had become a monk, might rise to take his place amongst the greatest nobles in the land. Moreover, the affairs of the monasteries were largely carried on according to the will of all the monks assembled in chapter. In the world of commerce there is the same story of democratic

control over town government and industry. In the republic of letters, too, we find real self-governing democratic bodies. Even among the villeins and other inhabitants of the manor we find a true though limited democratic community. All the men met together and decided the methods and times of cultivating the common fields, and the penalties to be exacted from those of their number who broke their regulations. They elected their own reeve to be responsible for them to their lord. And they elected four other lawful men to accompany the reeve and represent them in the courts of the Hundred and of the Shire. Even for the fighting class there was the republic of Chivalry, which, as we shall see, included them all, and in which all were equal despite inequalities of wealth and birth. It is in this endless series of democratic brotherhoods that the Middle Ages has made its most characteristic and most lasting contribution to modern civilisation.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CRUSADES

§ 1. The Origin and Course of the Crusades.

§ 2. Features of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, partly resulting from the Crusades.

- (*a*) The Increase of the Power of the Church :
  - (i) The Papacy and the Wealth of the Church.
  - (ii) The Military Orders :
    - (*α*) The Templars ;
    - (*β*) The Hospitallers, etc.
  - (iii) The Mendicant Orders.
  - (iv) The Intellectual Influence of the Mendicant Orders.
  - (v) Roger Bacon.
- (*b*) The Influx of Arabian Arts and Learning.
- (*c*) Economic Changes :
  - (i) Commutation of Feudal Rights.
  - (ii) Increase of Wealth and Importance of Towns.
- (*d*) The Expulsion of the Jews :
  - (i) Their Usury.
  - (ii) Their Learning.
  - (iii) The Growth of Popular Prejudice against the Jews.

§ 1. The Crusades were a failure. Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Moslem from 1244 to 1917. They intensified most of the evils which they sought to destroy. Yet, judged, as all movements are judged in scientific history, by the greatness of their results, the Crusades have an importance for England far greater than has usually been acknowledged. Though she took so little direct part in the Crusades, England at the time of the

Seventh Crusade was a very different place from that which saw Robert of Normandy sail away on the First Crusade. A great many causes, as we shall see, contributed to bring about this change. But the greatest one cause was the Crusades. Then, again, the Crusades possess an unique interest as the last occasion on which Europe realised in deed as well as word that it was one. They are the crowning proof that the Church of the Twelfth Century had succeeded at last in reviving for a short time the Imperial tradition in Europe, and in drawing men together to sacrifice themselves for an ideal that could not be expressed in terms of material wealth. Many men, it is true, who donned the cross, did so for unworthy motives. Some, like the Italian merchants, thought more of trading rights in the Levant than of possessing the Holy Sepulchre. Others went to Palestine, driven by superstitious terror, in the hope of atoning for a life of bloodshed by shedding Moslem blood in the Holy Places. Others were led on by mere love of adventure; others again because crime or debt made it advisable to put the broad sea between themselves and their home. But when all the varied motives have been allowed for to the full, the great fact emerges clear above them all, that vast numbers of men of every age and rank and tongue in Europe left all things on a quest of unmeasured hardship and danger—from which not a tithe returned, or could ever hope to return, alive—because they longed to gain for Christendom the ground that had been trodden by Him, who meant to them the highest and the best they knew.

The course of the military history of the Crusades does not concern us here. It is sufficient to notice that the Arab followers of the Prophet who conquered Jerusalem

in the Seventh Century (637 A.D.) were remarkably tolerant, and allowed Christian residents and Christian settlers every reasonable privilege. Relations between Christian and Moslem were often of the most friendly kind. Also, the Arabs, as we shall have occasion to notice more fully hereafter, attained to a far higher level of learning and culture than Western Christendom. But in the Eleventh Century the Moslem world of South-Western Asia underwent a rapid change. The Seljuk Turks of Central Asia, gathering other tribes into their vast host, overran it all, conquering all the territory as far as Egypt. These Seljuk tribes were at the outset converted to Mohammedanism ; and they brought about a religious revival of an extremely narrow and fanatical type. They discountenanced science, art and culture, as hostile to religion, and wherever the Turk—Seljuk or Ottoman—has gone from that day to this, there has followed in his train ignorance, fanaticism and decay. Above all, the Seljuks were most rude and scornful to 'idolators of the Crucifix,' as they called their Christian subjects or Christian pilgrims. Those who went to Jerusalem after its conquest by the Seljuks in 1071 met with insults which, when they sought to resent them, led often to a violent death. Rumours of these things spread all over Western Europe, and the story of Peter the Hermit, riding on his ass and preaching of his wrongs in the market places of France and Germany, though most of it is legendary, is at any rate typical of what happened.

There was also another cause at work from above. The Greek emperors, menaced by the ever-advancing hordes of Turks in Asia Minor, appealed to the great Gregory VII., and later to Urban II. They offered to unite the Greek Church with that of the West, from which

it had been divided ever since 1054. And the prospect of a Christendom, which should be an entire unity under the revived Papacy, was a tremendous incentive to Urban II. in making his famous appeal at the Council of Clermont in 1095.

Urban the Second's appeal struck a chord on almost every heart in the Council ; and the Council was Europe in epitome. A mysterious wave of spiritual enthusiasm swept everywhere in Christendom, and vast undisciplined masses of common people, under various leaders, set out for Constantinople, overland through Hungary. The majority died miserably on the way. Most of those who reached Constantinople survived to perish at the hands of the Turks in Asia Minor, or to languish in the slave markets of the East. These were followed by the more disciplined armies of knights and princes—younger sons many of them—who wished to carve out principalities for themselves. These, in alliance with the cunning Greek emperor, won back Asia Minor and Antioch, and at last, on July 15, 1099, Count Raymond of Toulouse and Geoffrey of Bouillon captured Jerusalem after a month's siege. Nineteenth Century historians love to tell with scorn of the fearful slaughter of the conquered that marked the Christian entry into the Holy City, and of the way in which, when all was over, " sobbing for excess of joy," the Crusaders put their blood-stained hands together in prayer at the Holy Sepulchre. It is not for us to scorn them because their mentality was not of the flabby Nineteenth Century type. They were children of another age, fierce and bloody in battle ; but sincere, otherworldly and capable of sublime self-sacrifice.

The story of the Crusades for nearly two centuries

more, is that of the way in which the feudal states of the West, in Syria, grew weak, and the Moslem grew more united and more strong. Expedition after expedition went out from the West, and availed less and less. The fall of Jerusalem in 1187 led to England's greatest effort in the Third Crusade, when Richard Coeur de Lion went out to perform prodigies of valour, to come within sight of Jerusalem and to return baffled.

Crusades now began to degenerate. The Fourth Crusade was directed against Christian but schismatic Constantinople; and when Jerusalem was recovered for a few years in 1229, it was recovered by the diplomacy of the Emperor Frederic II., who was under the Pope's ban of excommunication, and against whom the Pope had actually proclaimed a crusade! The efforts of S. Louis of France and our own king, Edward I., were powerless to revive the ardour and otherworldliness of the earlier crusades. The Popes were now constantly publishing crusades against their Christian enemies everywhere and, like the boy in the fable who cried 'Wolf!' too often, they soon failed to attract much attention. The ghosts of crusades walked about Europe till after the end of the Middle Ages, in the shape of cant and diplomatic phrases; but the living crusades died in the Thirteenth Century.

§ 2. In estimating the results of the Crusades, we have to keep constantly in mind the fallacy of referring all the changes that took place in England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries to them, and also the fallacy of forgetting that most phenomena have many causes, and that though the Crusades may be one cause, they were not the only cause of any of the changes which we have to consider.

(*a*, i) The result of the Crusades that comes first in importance is the growth in the influence of the Papacy, and in the wealth of the Church. Medieval man was devoted to two pursuits, which are somewhat difficult to reconcile—war and the Christian religion. When Urban II. preached the First Crusade he succeeded in reconciling them. Men gathered round him instead of round secular king or emperor, and enthusiasm for him knew no bounds. Hence, to some extent, it was that the Popes, until the middle of the Thirteenth Century, had that remarkable series of successes over the kings of Europe, to which allusion has been made in Chapter II.

The Pope's treatment of England, under King John and Henry III., was typical of what was going on all over Europe. Because John would not accept his nominee to the see of Canterbury in 1207, he first of all put the country under an interdict, so that no religious services could be carried on except in private. This meant that not only would the pious man be spiritually starved, but the whole country would be plunged in gloom. For nearly all the festivities that brightened the year were organised by the Church for the great religious festivals. King John replied by outlawing those clergy who refused to carry on their services as usual. This meant that any wrong done to a clerk, or any case to which a clerk was party, could not be heard by the law courts. This was the occasion on which the townspeople of Oxford attacked the clerks of the university, and thus caused the migration which was the genesis of Cambridge. The Pope next excommunicated John. No Christian person henceforth might consort with him. Still the king remained resolute, and remarkably active in overcoming his enemies. So the Pope played his last

card, by absolving John's subjects from their allegiance and calling on the son of the French king to depose him. This card proved a trump, and John made a humiliating submission to the Papal legate. He surrendered his dominions to the Pope, and received them back as a fief, over which the Pope was to be feudal overlord for ever. In token of his tenancy, John undertook to pay a tribute of 1000 marks per annum—a payment which continued to be made with more or less regularity—mostly less in the days of the Edwards—till the outbreak of the Hundred Years War. The Hildebrandine programme could no further go. The Pope, so far as England was concerned, was not only spiritual head, but secular feudal overlord of the world ; and in the early years of Henry III.'s infancy he made fatally full use of his power. It was largely owing to the influence of the papal legate in England that the son of John became recognised as King of England instead of the Dauphin. The Pope now began to make use of his vassal by those means that gradually undermined the moral influence of the medieval Papacy in England.

Perhaps the most vexatious of the Pope's abuses of power in England was his ' Provisions,' which afterwards led to the Statutes of Provisors. This meant that the Pope, often having many needy relatives, dependants and faithful servants, would command the ecclesiastics and other patrons in England to make provision for them with lucrative English benefices. An English bishop, for instance, would be forbidden to present any of his own diocesan clergy to any kind of preferment till he had found enough for a certain number of favourites suggested by the Pope. The papal nominees would usually be foreigners of the court of Rome, and would receive the

income of the benefices without ever visiting them or England at all. Bishop Grossteste of Lincoln, who led the popular party against papal interference and royal misrule in England, protested violently against the papal provisions. He himself was requested to make a young foreigner, nephew of the Pope, a prebendary in his own cathedral, and refused in a strikingly anti-papal letter, which shows how soon the excessive power of the Papacy began to be its undoing.

"Struck with amazement," says Matthew Paris, "at the avarice of the Romans, he caused his clerks carefully to reckon and estimate all the revenues of foreigners in England, and it was discovered and found for truth that the present Pope, Innocent IV., had pauperised the whole Church more than all his predecessors from the time of the primitive Papacy. The revenue of the alien clerks, whom he had planted in England, and whom the Church had enriched, amounted to 70,000 marks, while the king's revenue could not be reckoned at more than a third of that sum."

Apart from papal wealth, the wealth of the Church all over Europe was largely increased by the Crusades in many ways. Thus, for instance, the wave of religious enthusiasm that swept over Europe could not fail to find expression in bequests of property and the foundation of abbeys. Many crusaders, who never returned, left their possessions to the Church. Many who did return left property to the Church as a thank-offering for their safety. Moreover, the Church increased her moral power and influence in England, by constituting herself the protectress of the property of crusaders and of their wives and children, during their absence from home.

(ii) Much of the money that was given to the Church was given in the form of bequests to the military orders which are among the most remarkable results of the Crusades in the religious life of Europe. The Hospitallers, the Teutonic Knights, and the Templars, together with many other military orders that more remotely affected the development of England, were monks in their organisation and vows, but devoted to warfare against the infidel rather than to worship. Like the Crusades themselves, they offered medieval man an opportunity of reconciling and continuing his two most powerful instincts, religious asceticism and fighting.

(*a*) By far the most important of the military orders, as far as influence goes, was that of the Knights Templars, which here demand some attention. After the capture of Jerusalem during the First Crusade nine knights banded themselves together to protect pilgrims on their journeys through Palestine from the coast to Jerusalem. They took an oath to the Patriarch of Jerusalem to guard the public roads, to forsake worldly chivalry "of which human favour and not Jesus Christ was the cause," and living in poverty, chastity and obedience according to the rule of S. Benedict, "to fight with a pure mind for the supreme and true King." The King of Jerusalem assigned them a headquarters and a church close to the site of the ancient Jewish Temple (1118). From this small beginning grew the great order of "Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon."

The first head of the order, or Master of the Temple as he was called, Hugh de Payens, visited Europe in 1127 to get the order confirmed by the Pope and to win support from the faithful. The great Cistercian, S. Bernard of Clairvaux, supported them with all the might

of his immense influence. The order rapidly increased, and Hugh received grants of land in England from Henry I. and Stephen, and founded the Temple in London, leaving a prior—afterwards called a master—to look after the interests of the order in England. The original Temple in London was a modest building to the south of Holborn. Later on, a more spacious habitation, which still carries its ancient name, was erected on the banks of the Thames. Manors, lands and advowsons of churches were showered upon the Templars during the days of Henry II. and his sons, when crusading ardour was at its height, and many an English village to-day may be recognised as a former manor of the Templars or as the site of one of their houses, by the prefix—as Temple Bruere in Lincolnshire, Temple Hurst or Temple Rothley in Leicestershire, Temple Dynnesley in Hertfordshire, Temple Cowley in Oxfordshire. Matthew Paris, the historian, reckoned that altogether the order in his time (the middle of the Thirteenth Century) possessed nine thousand manors and lordships in Christendom.

All these vast possessions needed elaborate organisation and, as finally constituted, the order consisted of knights, with whom were associated chaplains, sergeants or esquires, and menials and craftsmen. All were brethren, bound together by the rules and enjoying the privileges of the order. At the head of all was the Grand Master of the Temple at Jerusalem, who ruled with almost, but not quite, unlimited power, and was regarded as the equal in state and dignity of any of the sovereigns of Europe. In each of the more important countries of Europe, as well as in Syria, there was a Master of the Temple. The English one sat in Parliament among the bishops and abbots. Upon the great estates in various

lands houses of the order were erected much after the style of small monasteries, managed by procurators and inhabited chiefly by sick and aged Templars. The 'preceptories of the Temple,' as these houses were called, were in England subject to the Master of the Temple in London, who used to write his orders to them beginning with the formula 'Praecipimus tibi,' we enjoin you; hence their name.

The rule of the order, as arranged by S. Bernard and sanctioned in 1128 by the Council of Troyes, throws a vivid light on certain aspects of medieval life and thought. Thus, the medieval passion for celibacy finds expression in the white mantle with the red cross, which was symbolical of chastity and which only unmarried knights might wear. The brethren are exhorted to shun the kiss of every woman, whether maid or widow, mother, aunt or sister. Rule 51 says: "It is, moreover, exceedingly dangerous to join sisters with you in your holy profession, for the ancient enemy hath drawn many away from the right path to Paradise through the society of women." Again, poverty and humility are enjoined in rules against luxurious apparel or against talk about their exploits in earlier days. Rule 37, for instance, says: "We will not that gold or silver, which is the mark of private wealth, should ever be seen on your bridles, breast-plates or spurs, nor should it be permitted to any brother to buy such. If, indeed, such-like furniture shall have been charitably bestowed upon you, the gold and silver must be so coloured that its splendour and beauty may not impart to the wearer an appearance of arrogance beyond his fellows." Again, rule 42: "We forbid and we resolutely condemn all tales related by any brother, of the follies and irregularities of which he hath

been guilty in the world or in military matters with either his brother or with any other man."

The work of the Templars in Palestine concerns us little. Suffice it to say that they formed the nucleus of the crusading armies and were remarkable for their gallantry and indifference to death. 'First in attack and last in retreat' is a true summary of their conduct. But their rashness was a frequent cause of disaster, as, for instance, at the battles of Tiberias and Hittin (1187). At Tiberias a few hundred Templars provoked a hopeless contest with 7000 Saracens, and all perished except four, who cut their way through the Moslem hosts to Nazareth. On the Sunday after the battle of Hittin, Saladin caused all the prisoners who were Templars or Hospitallers to be brought before him in the presence of his army. He gave them the choice of renouncing Christianity or going to execution. Accordingly, they all chose the latter alternative, and their heads were cut off there and then in the presence of Saladin and his Moslem host. Only the Grand Master was kept alive in the hope of a great ransom. Yet, in spite of all this valour it is noticeable that from as early a date as the middle of the Twelfth Century the Templars were accused of secret treachery and communications with the enemy. William of Tyre, the great historian of the Crusades, has many hints that they sometimes sacrificed the cause to covetousness.

However this may be, the wealth of the Templars in the Thirteenth Century was immense, and when the cause of the cross in Palestine was on the wane, the Templars became the great international financiers and bankers of Europe. Many advantages were combined to give them this function. They had strongholds scattered all over the civilised world from Armenia to Ireland.

Their military power and strict discipline ensured the safe transmission of money, and their reputation for strict integrity gave traders absolute confidence in them. It was through the Templars alone that the exchange of money with the wealthy East became possible. It was in the London Temple that Hubert de Burgh, as well as the wealthy foreigners of Henry III.'s reign, stored their wealth; and when Hubert was in disgrace, no threats of the king could induce the Templars to hand over his wealth without his own permission. The Temple was also the bank into which the debtors of foreign usurers paid their dues. Henry III. and Edward I. borrowed of the Templars for their wars. The Paris Temple was the centre of the world's money market. In it the princes of Europe deposited their revenues, and from it the Templars issued loans and managed to circumvent the usury laws by taking interest on them in a disguised form.

The sudden and tragic suppression of the Templars in 1312 was, it is now generally agreed, due largely to their vast wealth. Like Henry VIII. in his dealings with the English monasteries of a later age, Philip le Bel of France was largely actuated by a desire for the wealth of the Templars when he caused to be brought against them in eighty-seven articles a vast number of accusations, of heresy, idolatry, unspeakable vices and the most horrid kind of sacrilege. The Pope, Clement V., who was now living at Avignon and entirely under the thumb of the French king, was compelled, rather unwillingly, to order the arrest of members of the order all over Christendom. In France great numbers were put to most fearful tortures, and compelled either by torture or by fear of it to confess themselves guilty of the most outrageous crimes. Those

who confessed and then retracted their confessions were immediately burnt: fifty-four of them suffered this fate in Paris on Tuesday, May 12, 1310.

In England the fate of the Templars was not quite so terrible. Edward II. at first refused to believe the charges brought against them. But in response to a papal bull, issued on November 22, 1307, the Templars all over England were suddenly arrested and their property seized into the king's hands. The Master of the London Temple and many of his order were confined in the Tower, and others imprisoned by the sheriffs of the counties in which they were found. It is not certain that torture was used in England; and out of eighty knights examined only four confessed.

The examination of the Templars is the longest and most interesting criminal trial of which we have any records in the Middle Ages. At last the Pope on May 2, 1312, published the bull 'Ad Providam,' transferring the goods of the society to their rivals the Knights Hospitallers of S. John. The order was never definitely pronounced guilty, but simply abolished. The proposal had long been made that the Templars and Hospitallers should be combined into one in the interests of efficiency, and such a thing might have happened thirty years previously, but for the bitter opposition of the two orders themselves. The transference of the property of the Templars to the Knights of S. John meant that in France it would be under the control of Philip le Bel. To bring about this he had let loose fire and torture upon the unfortunate Templars all over Christendom.

The London Temple was granted by Edward II. to the Earl of Pembroke, from whom it passed to the king's powerful and turbulent cousin, Thomas, Earl of

Lancaster. From him a number of students and professors of common law gained a lease of the building, which they converted into the great common law university of England. From that time to this the abode of the military monks has been devoted to a new kind of Templars, who, as has been quaintly observed, now "defend one Christian from another, as the old ones did Christian from Pagan."

The question as to whether the order was really guilty of the charges brought against them has given rise to a historical controversy that has lasted for two centuries and a half. It is now generally agreed that they were innocent. But the charges brought against them are of great interest in many ways. First, because some of them may be true: so much smoke being perhaps evidence of some little fire. But still more they are of interest because they throw a light on the current ideas of the time, the suspicion of secret societies and the curious superstitions that were floating about Europe as a result of its crusading connection with the East.

A few instances of the accusations that were commonly brought against the Templars in various parts of Christendom should, therefore, be noticed in passing. It was said that the ceremonies of admission of candidates to the order were done in secret, and that after certain obscene rites they were compelled to spit upon a crucifix—a practice which may originally have been a test of obedience.

Again, the Templars were accused of renouncing Christ and worshipping an idol of an evil spirit called Baphomet, that is Mahommet, who was often regarded in the ignorant West not as a prophet but as a demon or false god to whom sacrifices were offered. Possibly, the

intellectual ferment caused by connection with the civilised East did cause some to lose faith in their religion or to take an interest in Islam, and in some survivals of ancient Gnostic dualism, such as were found amongst the Cathari and Albigenses. Other fantastic charges include the worshipping of an evil spirit in the form of a black cat, together with most loathsome and unnatural vices. These, no doubt, originated from popular curiosity and suspicion. Children at their play were said to bid one another beware of a Templar's kisses. Strange stories floated about everywhere. Some told of children slain by their parents, because they had chanced to witness the secret orgies of the society. Others told of spiritualistic practices, and the raising of devils and evil spirits in the forms of beautiful women, at their nightly meetings. In France they were even said to be in the habit of roasting their illegitimate children and of smearing the idols, which they worshipped, with the burning fat.

The suppression of the Templars had one very lasting result on popular thought in Europe. It set the seal of the highest authority, that of Pope, bishops and kings, upon many degrading superstitions, such as belief in witchcraft and personal intercourse with the Devil. It gave a similar authority to the practice of using torture to accused persons, and to the hideous witch-hunts which survived in Northern Europe and in the United States of America till the beginning of the last century.

(β) The Knights Hospitallers, who began as a society for caring for sick pilgrims at Jerusalem and then developed into a military order—the bitter rival of the Templars—do not so much concern us. Their connection with England was slighter and their 'commanderies'

in England fewer than the houses of the Templars. Certain names of villages with the suffix 'S. John,' preserve the memory that a 'commandery' of Hospitallers was once settled in them. The chief interest of the order is that it has continued to exist and usefully to outlive the cause that brought it into existence. Similarly, the Teutonic Knights—always closely connected with the Hospitallers—found a new lease of life in fighting the heathen of the Baltic coasts long after zeal for the regaining of the Holy Sepulchre had grown cold. Whatever else they did or failed to do, the military orders have had a great and abiding result on Western civilisation. They diverted man's instinct of mere pugnacity into a new channel—the channel of Christian chivalry. They did much to change the ideal of the Dark Ages—that of mere brute strength—into the ideal of the 'perfect gentle knight,' who dedicated his sword to God, to be used only in just quarrel, and in the defence of the weak and the helpless.

(iii) For men so intensely religious as those of the Middle Ages there were two attitudes towards the heathen possible. One was to fight them and to propagate Christianity with the sword, the other was to argue with them and to convert them to Christ. The former attitude was that of the first crusaders and of the military orders; and it led naturally to attempts to deal with heretics in the same way. Thus, for instance, the Fourth Crusade was directed not against the Moslem, but against Christian, but schismatic, Constantinople; and the fierce onslaught against the heretical Albigenses of Southern France in the second decade of the Thirteenth Century was dignified with the name of a crusade. But there is nothing like fighting for giving combatants

mutual respect and understanding; and so the long battles with Mohammedans and with heretics give rise in the Thirteenth Century to a desire to reason with them and to convert them. This desire finds expression in the mendicant orders, or friars, who spread over Europe in the Thirteenth Century, when the tide of the crusading spirit was at the full.

At the beginning of the Thirteenth Century S. Dominic and S. Francis were urged on by a burning desire to convert the heathen and the heretic, to make a new departure in religious organisations. The orders which have since borne their names consisted of missionaries, living lives of absolute poverty, sent out to preach and to convert men to Christ, by argument and by example, and not by the sword. The Dominicans and Franciscans and other orders of friars that followed in their wake, may also be regarded from another point of view, as a reaction against the neglect of pastoral work in the Church. The practice of leaving the advowsons of livings to monasteries, who themselves became the rectors and pocketed the revenues of livings in that capacity, led to fearful neglect of the spiritual needs of country people in most districts. The monasteries would sometimes be content to send a monk in priest's orders to take an occasional service in a parish church of which it was rector. It cost Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, during the latter years of King John's reign, a vast amount of energy to compel every monastery to appoint a vicar, that is, a proxy or representative, in every parish of which it was rector. These vicars were, as a rule, so badly paid that only men of very inferior parts would accept the office. They were usually too ignorant to preach or efficiently to minister

to the spiritual needs of their parishioners. Moreover, devotion to pastoral work offered hardly any prospect of worldly advancement. It was the university scholar and the monk who were singled out for preferment. The result was that many a parish in England, as in the other countries of Latin Christendom, was virtually heathen. The mendicant orders were specially trained to remedy this condition—to go from place to place, having no fixed abode, to mix with the people, to preach to them in a popular style, and to hear their confessions.

They may also be regarded as a reaction against the wealth of the monasteries. The friar was to live in absolute poverty. His needs were to be supplied by begging; his headquarters were to be a group of mud huts in the most squalid and disease-stricken area of some great town; he went barefooted like the Friar of Oxford, who found a pair of old shoes and wore them, but, being rebuked in a dream the following night, arose and threw them from a window in an agony of remorse. All this was in great contrast with the wealth and magnificent buildings of the monastic and military orders. When Richard I. was rebuked for pride, avarice and luxury, it was not without some little truth that he replied, "I give my pride to the Templars, my avarice to the Cistercians and my luxury to the Benedictines."

The foundation of the Dominicans and Franciscans does not directly concern us. The shortest possible notice is sufficient. Dominic Guzman, a Spaniard, who had lived a life of the greatest austerity from his earliest youth and became a canon regular of Osma, accompanied his bishop to Southern France in 1206, in the thirty-sixth year of his age. There he saw with sorrow the spread of

a medley of heretical doctrines amongst the inhabitants of Provençe, and determined to dedicate his life to the conversion of heretics by preaching, and by meeting false doctrine with true. Hence, his order was often known as that of the Friars Preachers. The black-robed Dominicans were the Puritans of the later Middle Ages, severe to themselves and severe to others. It was they, who in later times were the backbone of the persecuting section of the Church.

In considerable contrast to these were the Franciscans, founded by the gentle S. Francis, the most beautiful character of the Middle Ages. He was the son of a wealthy merchant of Assisi and brought up to follow his father's business. For the first twenty-three years of it, his life seems to have been a slightly dissipated one. But suddenly he renounced the world and all its vanities and determined to imitate Christ by a life of utter poverty. When his father drove him from his home in anger, S. Francis set out to walk all over Europe as a beggar, murmuring "Now is God more than ever my Father." He visited the East during the Fifth Crusade and attempted to convert the Sultan of Egypt. Companions gathered round him, attracted by that wonderful personal magnetism, which the very birds and the wild animals could not resist. For them he drew up his rule, and they called themselves by the humble title of 'Friars Minor,' that is, lesser brethren. The rule was approved in 1223 by Pope Honorius III., who had recently approved of that of S. Dominic. He gave them also the same privileges as the Dominicans—namely, the right to preach and to hear confessions everywhere. These rights were not long in bringing them into conflict with the parish clergy, as many a man preferred making

a confession to a friar, whom he would never see again, to making it to his own parish priest.

Judged by its results, the landing of the Dominicans in England in 1220, and the Franciscans four years later, was one of the most important events in the history of the Thirteenth Century. The grey-robed Franciscans were taken under the wing of the great Robert Grossteste, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln. They were organised under a superior for England and Southern Scotland, and by 1300 they had some sixty houses in this country. Even more than the stern Dominicans, the cheerful Franciscans, with their kindliness and enthusiasm and the homely and pithy tales with which they adorned their preaching, won the hearts of the people. The great sought them as chaplains, the poor sought them as champions against their oppressors. Their utter poverty and devotion to their cause gave them a moral power in England, unlike anything that has ever been known before or since. They became so popular and influential that other orders of mendicants grew up everywhere in an attempt to emulate their sanctity and their influence over mankind. These orders grew so numerous that the Second Council of Lyons abolished all of them except the four great orders, viz. the Dominicans and Franciscans, and two others. One of these was the Carmelites or White Friars, so called from the white cloak which covered their habit. These had been founded as a purely contemplative order, but soon followed the prevailing fashion and became mendicants in 1245. The other was the Augustinians or Hermits of S. Augustine of Hippo. They are commonly called Austin Friars. But neither of these ever quite achieved the position of the original orders of S. Francis and S. Dominic.

(iv) The most important influence exercised by the friars of a later generation was an intellectual one—something quite unforeseen by S. Francis and only partly by S. Dominic. From the very first the friars began to make for the universities. The Dominicans settled in Oxford the same year in which they settled in England, and the Franciscans likewise made straight for Oxford and Cambridge. A university, with its large floating population, gave much scope for missionary labour, and, also, an opportunity for gaining recruits from among the students. The Dominicans from the first had been given a preliminary training in philosophy before they entered upon the study of theology, in order the better to reason with educated heretics. The Franciscans were led by their care for the poor to study medicine, and medicine led on to physical science, in which a great number of Franciscan scholars were the pioneers of human thought in the Middle Ages. S. Francis himself heard with sorrow of the academical distinctions won by members of his order; and the original rule which forbade worldly possessions—even scientific apparatus or mathematical instruments, or pen and ink—would have been fatal to their studies had not the Pope in 1279 sanctioned the 'moderate use' of goods. In spite of all difficulties, the Franciscans, long after their spiritual influence had decayed, left behind them an intellectual tradition of training in mathematics, natural philosophy and natural science, which has never died.

(v) From one famous instance we can gauge the depth of the studies of the Franciscans, their enthusiasm for learning, and their appalling difficulties. That instance is the great and unfortunate and, for a long time, legendary, Roger Bacon. Of the life of this remarkable man, only

a few facts and surmises remain to us. He was born at Ilchester in Somersetshire about 1214, of a fairly wealthy family which was impoverished by its loyalty to Henry III. He studied at Oxford, where he came under the influence of the two great scholar saints of the age, S. Edmund Rich of Abingdon, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and Robert Grossteste. Later on he went to Paris, where he must have spent many years of his life; and sometime, either at Oxford or at Paris, he was received into the Franciscan order and continued his studies, till they were interrupted by a series of misfortunes. First, a serious illness wasted two years of his life, and on his recovery he was faced by a prohibition from his superiors in about 1260 to publish any book without special permission, "under pain of losing the book and fasting many days on bread and water." Thus he remained dumb to the world till his friend, Cardinal Guy le Gros de Foulques, whom he had met many times at Oxford and Paris, became Pope Clement IV., and commanded him in 1266 to send him an account of his views and ideas in writing. With vast difficulty in obtaining parchment and copyists and scientific instruments, owing to his poverty, he obeyed, and the result was the *Opus Majus*, together with a few smaller works which served the purpose of appendixes to it. It gives us a magnificent view of Bacon's vast learning and intellectual independence and clarity of vision; yet it was only intended as a rapid review of the state of learning and of the way in which Western Christendom might dominate the intellectual world. It was to be followed by a *Scriptum Principale*, a vast encyclopaedia of all human knowledge, which alas! was never to be accomplished. Bacon soon fell into more

trouble. His work gave rise to suspicion of magic, heresy and sympathy with the Mohammedans, and many other things summed up under the word, 'novelties.' He was imprisoned for some years. His later life, which still awaits the investigation of scholars, is wrapped in utter obscurity. He is thought to have died about the year 1294. He is, as has been well said, one of those who have been crushed by the wheel of their time as they endeavoured to set it going more quickly.

Such is the extremely meagre outline of the life of one who, in spite of the efforts made by Nineteenth Century historians to belittle him, stands forth as one of the five or six greatest scholars and thinkers that have appeared among the human race. He was acquainted with Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic—languages then unknown in Western Christendom ; and fragments of a Greek and of a Hebrew Grammar of his still survive. He was one of the few Christians acquainted with the learning of the world of Islam. He is the first who ever embarked upon the scientific study of comparative religion, which engaged his attention because of the Mongol hordes which were then sweeping over Asia and hovering between Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. He makes brilliant essays into the science of comparative philology ; and hazards guesses as to the families of languages and their primitive relations, in the manner worthy of a Nineteenth Century scholar.

But it is in the realms of physical science that Bacon's discoveries and sureness of vision are a cause of perennial astonishment. It was he who first asserted that the passage of light from the stars occupied time ; and he tells, in a remarkably modern style, of mirages, burning-mirrors, of the diameters of the celestial bodies and their

distances from one another, and of their conjunctions and eclipses. He gives an exposition of the laws of the tides and points out the error in the Julian calendar. He has still more appealed to the imagination of posterity by explaining the composition and effects of gunpowder and other explosive compounds ; and by contemplating the possibility of the microscope, the telescope, the steamship and the aeroplane.

Far more important than any sensational discovery was his great attempt to foster human progress and scholarship, by laying down the necessity of two great departments of intellectual activity, which passed almost unnoticed for centuries, but which are now recognised as responsible for a very great deal of the progress of the past three hundred years.

The first necessity was what we should now call philology and textual criticism. Bacon was particularly disgusted with the study of corrupt Latin versions of Aristotle and of the Bible. Few of the scholars of Western Christendom knew anything of the original languages of these great volumes. The translation of Aristotle had in many cases been made from Arabic translations of the original Greek. Sometimes, books originally written in Greek passed through Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac before reaching the Latin. In the course of this transmission very much of the original sense had been lost ; and so many errors had crept in, that he considered that it would have been better if Aristotle had never been known in the West at all. He says in effect, "Before you study any ancient book, first of all study the language of the original, collate manuscripts and get a sound text."

The second necessity was that men should experiment.

The tendency of his age, and of many ages afterwards, was to take for granted some statement in Aristotle or elsewhere, or some worthless popular superstition, and to deduce conclusions from it. Bacon says in effect: "Do not take anything for granted. Aristotle may be mistaken just like anyone else. Observe and experiment. Collect particular instances and argue inductively from them to general laws." If only mankind would follow this method of research, Bacon saw a future ahead that would stagger the imagination. "Machines for navigating are possible without rowers, so that great ships suited to river or ocean, guided by one man, may be borne with greater speed than if they were full of men. Likewise, cars may be made so that without a draught animal they may be moved with incalculable speed, as we may deem the scythed chariot to have been from which antiquity fought. And flying machines are possible, so that a man may sit in the middle turning some device by which artificial wings may beat the air in the manner of a flying bird."

Bacon's philology and experimental science was soon lost for ages in the mists of decadent scholasticism. But so great a man could not entirely die even then. It is pleasing to find that one of the chief authorities that led Columbus to set out on the voyage to America was a quotation from Bacon's *Opus Majus*, though Columbus did not know its source.[1]

(*b*) With the rise of the friars and the great Friar Bacon, we conclude our account of the effect of the Crusades on the Church and on the growth of ecclesiastical orders. Bacon forms a convenient bridge from the

[1] See Bridges: *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon.* Oxford University Press.

subject to a consideration of the effects of the Crusades in bringing the learning of the Greeks and Arabs into Western Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. The Crusades were not the only cause of this influx of learning, as will be seen when we point out that there were four great channels by which it flowed into the West.

The first channel had its entrance in Spain, where Arabic learning reached very nearly to its high-water mark. Christian and Mohammedan often lived side by side in Spain, and students had little difficulty at times in passing from a Christian to a Mohammedan university. In the middle of the Twelfth Century, Raymond, Archbishop of Toledo, set up a systematic school of translators from the Arabic and other oriental languages into Latin. It was thus that many works, especially Aristotle's "Physics," "Metaphysics" and "Psychology" at last reached Paris and Oxford.

The next channel was Sicily, where Christian and Moslem fought and fraternised, and where many traditions of Greek culture still lingered. The broad-minded and scholarly Emperor Frederic II., who, like Roger Bacon, suffered from being in advance of his age, made the university of Salerno, on the mainland of Italy, a great intellectual exchange, where Greek and Latin, Jew and Arab, studied and disputed side by side. It was from Salerno that much of the improved medical knowledge of the Thirteenth Century flowed into North-Western Europe.

After Sicily comes the great treasure-house of Greek learning, Constantinople, from which ever since the First Crusade a small stream of ancient civilisation had been trickling steadily into the West. The conquest of

Constantinople by the Latins in what is known as the Fourth Crusade, changed the small stream into a torrent.

Lastly, comes the scene of the Crusades proper, Palestine and Egypt.

There the English knight would find himself rubbing shoulders in times of peace with Arab, Syrian Christian, Greek, Italian and Armenian, under circumstances of climate and geographical configuration that made his English methods of life impossible. He came back to England crammed with new ideas and with admiration for the mighty cities of the South and the East, through which he had passed on his way to and from the Holy Sepulchre. Thus, the crusader brought back with him foreign plants like the wallflower and the lilac from the East, and the rose tree from Provençe ; mechanical devices, such as the windmill, from the Syrians, and clockwork from the Greeks. Explosive mixtures, composed of saltpetre, which had been known in the Greek Empire before the Eighth Century A.D., led to the discovery of gunpowder, which, as we shall see later on, was so potent in its effects on the art of war, and, through that, on social conditions in Western Europe. Still more important, ultimately, was the introduction of paper, the prime necessity of modern civilisation, which will be considered in a later chapter in connection with the art of printing.

Again, it was the crusader in distant Palestine who was largely responsible for the rise of a literature no longer in Latin, but in the various vernacular languages of Western Europe. He was not a scholar trained to write Latin, but having often a little education, wished to write to those at home. He naturally did so in the familiarly spoken language of his home. Once a language gets put

into writing it begins to acquire a fairly fixed form, and speaking, as a living language does, directly to the heart, it will naturally develop a literature of song, legend and romance, and later, a literature of a more weighty type. It is noticeable that in England constitutional documents, which were formerly written in Latin, begin in the Thirteenth Century to be drafted in Norman French—and that in spite of the fact that the connection with Normandy had been broken under King John at the beginning of the century, and that England was becoming more English every day.

The intellectual influence of the Arabs on European thought is almost incalculable in its vast extent. In the Dark Ages only the logical works of Aristotle had survived in a translation of Boethius. The rest of his works gradually came to the Latin universities through Latin translations of the Arabic ; and the influence of these on the development of later medieval scholasticism was so great as to shape all subsequent thought till the Fifteenth Century. In a similar way, algebra, which had its birth in ancient Egypt, was systematised by the Greeks, and developed almost to its modern form by the Arabs of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, reached Christendom.

The scientific and medicinal knowledge that reached medieval England from Arab sources, mostly by way of the University of Salerno, can never be forgotten so long as such words as alkali, alcohol, alembic and zero remain in our language to remind us whence they came. The sciences of alchemy and astrology—for it is only to play with words to deny them the dignity of sciences—had been widely studied in the later days of the Roman Empire, but had perished, like so much else, leaving only

some very scanty remains in the Dark Ages. They gradually came back to us from the Arabs, during the era of the Crusades. Alchemy has been derided for several centuries because some of the hypotheses, on which the alchemists worked, do not square with modern scientific views. But it should be remembered that a hypothesis of some sort is necessary to all research. No one denies to Priestly the dignity of a scientist, yet his 'phlogiston hypothesis' was not less inconsistent with modern science than the theories of the alchemists, as we shall see now that we come to examine them. At the back of their researches was the view that all the metals were closely related compounds, made up of two elements combined in varying proportions, and that, therefore, one metal might be transmuted into another. It is interesting to notice in passing that recent research into radio activity and the production of helium from radium tends to the revival of a theory not altogether unlike this one. The two elements that composed the metals were sulphur and mercury—not in the form in which we find them, but in some idealised condition. The metal which was the goal of the alchemist was gold; not, as has been so often insinuated, simply from a vulgar desire for wealth, but because gold was regarded as the perfect metal of which all the other metals were mere diseased corruptions. To change a metal into gold was to cure it of its disease, and the same process which would free a metal from disease would also free a human body from all the diseases that flesh is heir to and produce the elixir of life. The true criticism of the alchemist is not that he had a hypothesis to work on—all scientific research must have one—but that he accepted his hypothesis on tradition without sufficiently testing it and experimenting

for himself, as Roger Bacon was for ever exhorting him to do. The Middle Ages abounded in keen scholars and hard-headed business men, but almost all of them believed in the possibility of the transmutation of the baser metals into gold. The worldly and sceptical Chaucer in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, while holding up to ridicule the wiles of impostors and charlatans, firmly believes that the great feat could be, and had been, accomplished. Alchemy was first made prominent in Western Europe by the famous Michael Scott, who studied it from Arabic sources—first, in Sicily, under the Emperor Frederick II. and, later, at Toledo. He appeared at Oxford in 1230, with Latin translations of certain works of Aristotle. His real fame as a scientist has been obscured, like that of Roger Bacon, by legends of his magical feats, which have inspired literature from the days of Dante and Boccaccio to those of Sir Walter Scott. Roger Bacon himself included alchemy in his encyclopaedic learning, but the term as he understands it is a very wide one, including " the science of the generation of things from elements " ; and " how to make noble metals and colour and the art of prolonging life." Raymond Lully, the great Portuguese missionary of the end of the Thirteenth Century, sought to call alchemy to his aid in order to further his missionary work among the Moors of Africa, and states in his will that he succeeded in converting twenty-two tons of quick-silver, lead and tin into gold. The tradition, however, that he was invited to England by John Cremer, the alchemist, Abbot of Westminster, and there coined rose-nobles for Edward III.'s new gold currency, does not rest on a sound historical foundation. There is still in existence a writ of the year 1329, for the seizure of " Master

William de Dalby and John le Rous for making silver by the art of alchemy," and in the documents of the Mint alchemy is mentioned as one of the regular sources of the precious metals. Towards the end of the Fourteenth Century the practice of alchemy became so popular that it caused as much consternation as the newspaper reports in 1920, which asserted that a German scientist had discovered a means of making gold artificially. By a statute of 1403, "the craft of multiplying gold and silver" was declared to be felony. But few voices were raised to declare that the artificial gold of the alchemist would not bear the same tests as natural gold.

Closely connected with alchemy as well as with medicine was astrology, which may also be counted as a science, for it is simply astronomy studied on a hypothesis that is not nowadays held—namely, that the sun and the moon and the stars have an effect on the lives and characters of individuals, and on the history of the world. The twelve constellations that form the Zodiac were each of them supposed to dominate one portion of the human body. Again, the position of the sun and moon at the time of a man's birth was supposed to have a decisive influence on his destiny. The stars had to be consulted in order to find out the propitious time for taking any important step: making war, getting married, going on a journey or taking medicine. In an age, when all but a few believed that the earth was the centre of the world, round which all the heavenly bodies revolved, there is nothing remarkable in such beliefs; especially when we remember that the moon and the stars do exercise at least a physical influence over the earth, if only in the case of tides. However absurd the hypotheses at the back of medieval astrology may seem to us,

this much can be said for them—and much more cannot be said for any hypothesis of science in any age—they led to important discoveries. The astrologer required for his business a considerable amount of real knowledge of the stars, and in the course of time he would accumulate a vast mass of observations taken to check his tables. The astronomy of the Arabs, considering the imperfect instruments at their command, must always excite admiration; tables of over 1000 fixed stars were quite common. One of them came into the possession of Roger Bacon, who calls it an 'almanack,' an Arabic word, ultimately of Greek origin like so much of the learning of Islam. So much for our intellectual debt to the world of Islam, contracted during the Crusades.

(*c*) We have now to consider the economic results of the departure of vast masses of men for Palestine to make war and to settle abroad.

(i) The first economic result was the commutation of feudal rights and dues for money. Knight and noble, intending to make the great journey, felt a need for money in the form of coins, such as they had never known before. England in the early Twelfth Century contained little money. Dues were paid in kind. Even the royal taxes were partly paid in the produce of field and garden till the reign of Henry I. The noble who had many manors did not exact money from them in any large quantity; he simply visited the manors one by one with his household, and ate and drank his share of the produce of the manor. Again, an official was not paid an income of coins every year for his services, but was endowed with land, the produce of which supported him. There were probably a great number of people in England who had never possessed a single piece of money in their lives. The

crusaders changed all this. Their villeins might now pay a sum of money down, in order to enjoy their holdings without doing any more service for them. More often they paid a sum of money every year, in order to escape all or part of their services ; and when this had gone on for many years the strength of tradition made it impossible for a lord to get services instead of money again. Knights and nobles in turn bought rights, too numerous to mention, from their overlords for money. Even kings —as, for instance, when William the Lion of Scotland, bought certain, very uncertain, feudal rights over Scotland from his overlord, Richard I., for £10,000— were not exempt from the universal desire to commute rights into money.

The desire for money would still further be intensified if any great noble was taken prisoner either by Moslem or, as not infrequently happened, by the barbarous Christian through whose land he travelled. The holding of Richard I. to ransom by the Emperor Henry VI., and the demand for the immense sum of £100,000, led to numerous new departures in taxation. A tax on movables, as opposed to land, was first levied in England by Henry II. in aid of the Third Crusade. The experiment was repeated in the agonised efforts to obtain money for Richard's ransom, and henceforth personal property is taxed as regularly as land—a testimony to the rising standard of comfort in this country during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.

(ii) The selling of feudal rights in the form of charters to towns has been noticed in a previous chapter. Prosperous towns were constantly trying to buy more rights and were ambitious to get as good a charter as their greater neighbours. Thus, the men of Derby offered

King John sixty marks for a charter like that of Nottingham, and the men of Gloucester offered him a very large sum of two hundred marks for the customs, laws and liberties of Winchester. New trading rights would react on the prosperity of towns, and *vice versa*. Towns would grow rich, also, by the provisioning and equipping of great crusading hosts, and by the opening up of new trade routes. As trade followed the flag in modern times, so to a great degree it followed the Cross. Many men, especially those of the great commercial cities of Italy, regarded the Crusades chiefly as a means of gaining new markets and new sources of raw material. The number of great maps drawn during the crusading epoch testify to the widening of men's horizons—especially in England, with its great 'Mappa Mundi' of Hereford Cathedral. New luxuries, new trade routes, and an ever-increasing spirit of adventure did much for English towns, and put London at least on a level with some of the great towns of Western Europe. It was by the ever-increasing tide of money in town and country that feudalism, as a living fact, with its payments in service and in kind, was overwhelmed; though feudalism as a legal theory of human relations is not dead. A class of men grew up with little or no land and no noble blood, but great wealth and influence, like the De la Poles of Hull in the Fourteenth Century, and the London merchants who used to entertain Edward III. and other kings at their tables.

All this wealth was reflected in the appearance of the towns themselves. The old mud and thatch huts, which bordered the streets even of London in Norman times, gave place to handsome stone and timber houses tiled with stone. In Richard I.'s time, houses in London were

definitely forbidden to be built otherwise than of stone for fear of fire. The scarcity of space within a walled town caused the houses to be built many storeys high, each storey overlapping the one beneath it to such an extent that the top stories of houses on the opposite sides of the street were little more than an arm's length apart, and shut out most of the daylight from the narrow, filth-bespattered street below. A substantial citizen of the Thirteenth Century had a house, no longer of the Norman-age plan with one big room, together with a cellar and sleeping room, but of many private rooms. His bedchambers were furnished with real beds, instead of the bundle of straw on which his great grandparents had slept. His walls no longer showed the bare masonry, but were covered with drapery and were not unadorned with pictures. His windows would no longer let in all weathers through open lattice work, but would be fitted with small pieces of thick and translucent, though not transparent, glass. His food would no longer be limited to the uninteresting meat, fresh in summer and salt in winter, varied by dried and evil-smelling stock-fish on the fast days of the Church. Many fruits and wines and spices from the South and the East would add to the delicacy of his tables. His leisure might even be enlivened by books of romance and lives of saints, which he could read in his own language.

(*d*) There remains yet one great factor in commerce and civilisation without which any view of the crusading era would be utterly inadequate. This was the Jewish population which grew rich through the Crusades. Any Jews that may have visited England in pre-Norman times probably did so in the capacity of slave traders. But it was the Norman Conquest that introduced a large

body of Jews into the chief commercial centres of this country, to get their living by finance. Finance, as has often been pointed out, was the only career open to them so long as they clung faithfully to their religion. No Jew might hold any kind of public office, neither might he hold land by feudal tenure, without taking an oath of fealty of a distinctly Christian kind to his overlord; neither could he engage in ordinary business in a town without becoming a member of a gild, which, as we have seen, was essentially a religious body laying the utmost stress on religious observances. On the other hand, there was one business forbidden to a Christian, the business of usury. It was, therefore, practically the only profession which a Jew might legitimately follow in a medieval Christian state.

(i) Usury was forbidden by the Church, which based her prohibition on many well-known passages in the Bible, and on the dictum of Aristotle about the 'barrenness of money.' It was considered that a Christian ought to lend his money to his fellow man on adequate security without seeking any profit as, if the money was not lent, it would only lie idle in the owner's strong box. Moreover, in the early Middle Ages, when trade and commerce were of the smallest and simplest character, a man only borrowed money when he was poor and in difficulties. Thus, to lend money on usury was to take advantage of a man's misfortunes. A more modern age was never contemplated, in which commerce became world-wide, and a man would borrow money, not because he was poor, but because he was rich and prosperous and wished to enlarge still further the boundaries of his enterprise. As soon as this new state of things came about, Church and State allowed the usury laws to be

circumvented by Christians like the Templars and the various Lombard money-lenders of the Thirteenth Century. The circumvention was easily done by one of those legal fictions dear to the medieval mind. The method of the Templars seems to have been that the borrower paid the lender a nominal rent towards the reduction of the debt; but this nominal rent was in excess of the real sinking fund by an amount which served as interest. The Lombard financiers, who battened on the destruction of the Templars and the expulsion of the Jews, had a simpler method. The borrower undertook to repay his loan on a certain day. He failed to do so, thus presumably causing his creditor loss, for which compensation was due. This compensation was really interest.

The Jew, not being a Christian and not forbidden by his law to lend on usury to the Gentile,[1] did so openly, and made vast fortunes. But his path was by no means one of roses, as he was entirely at the mercy of the king. He was outside the common law of the land and had no legal rights except such as the king allowed him. He was from a legal point of view the king's chattel and, therefore, of much the same status as a wild beast in the royal forests. The king might tax the Jew at will, and at the Jew's death all his wealth went to the king. In actual fact, however, the king defended his Jews to such an extent that they were not infrequently in a privileged position; and he usually left the heir of a Jew in possession of about a third of his father's wealth, in order that he might trade therewith and increase it—with a view to subsequent plunder.

The Jews in the Twelfth Century grew so rich as to

[1] *Deuteronomy*, xxiii. 20.

become one of the chief sources of royal income. In the insecure conditions in which they lived they exacted a very high rate of interest—anything from twopence to fourpence per week per pound, this is from 43 to 86 per cent. per annum. Jocelyn de Brackelonde, in his famous chronicle of the Abbey of S. Edmunds, shows how a debt of £26 13s. 4d. to Benedict, the Jew of Norwich, grew in a few years to £880. When the famous Aaron of Lincoln died in 1189, the king seized all his treasure and debts, leaving nothing for his sons. The treasure was lost in the English Channel, but the debts were so extensive that a special branch of the Treasury, 'the Exchequer of Aaron,' had to be organised. From the fact that after sixteen years £15,000 of debt was still outstanding, we may place Aaron's total wealth at not far short of £40,000: this is more than the king's annual income. For the Saladin Tithe, in 1188, Henry II. took a quarter of the Jewish chattels, and this amounted to £60,000, whereas a tenth of the movables of the rest of the country amounted to £70,000. No doubt the rest of the country evaded much of the liabilities; but it looks as if the Jews owned about one-quarter of all the personal property in the kingdom. It has been estimated that about one-tenth of the king's income was derived from the Jews. Thus the keeping of Jews by the king to plunder other people, and to be plundered in turn by himself, amounted to an indirect form of taxation—and a very bad form from the point of view of economics, as the vast sums which the Jews extorted from their debtors were out of all proportion to the amount that reached the king's coffers.

(ii) None the less, the presence of the Jews in England was of very great value to its civilisation and culture. They led the way in stone house-building. The finest

specimens of the Norman domestic architecture that have survived are the stone houses of wealthy Jews, like the famous house at Lincoln, and Moys Hall, Bury S. Edmunds, which were first built in the midst of mud and thatch huts that served the needs of Christian citizens. Jewish medical men were highly valued all over Europe. They were one of the channels by which the medical knowledge of the Mohammedans reached Christendom. They preserved a considerable amount of the learning of the ancient world; and in the Twelfth Century the English Jews were prolific writers on many subjects: grammar, metaphysics, fables, poetry, medicine and commentaries on the Scriptures. In their communities much attention was paid to the education of their boys. All were educated in their own schools in the Bible and Talmud, and the more promising ones were sent to the great Rabbinical School in Ironmonger Lane, London. There was probably hardly a Jew in the country but what could at least read and write; and Peter of Blois tells us that in a theological dispute a Jew rarely got the worst of the encounter. Their relations with the Christians seem to have been very good in many parts of England in the Twelfth Century. Christians were often invited to their festivals, and instances are on record in which not merely laymen, but monks, became converted to Judaism. The friars interceded for the Jews at the expense of much unpopularity even in the Thirteenth Century.

(iii) At the end of the century, however, a great change for the worse came over these relations. This had two causes. First, the crusading ardour aroused by the news of the loss of Jerusalem at the end of Henry II.'s reign, vented itself on the unbelievers at home. This was

especially the case when crusaders borrowed from the Jews in order to equip themselves, and saw unbelievers become rich on their sacrifices for the Catholic faith. The terrible massacres of Richard I.'s reign, especially that of York, were led by crusaders, who took care to burn the proofs of their indebtedness. Henceforth, copies of all Jewish bonds were kept by the Crown officials. Secondly, the fact that Jews were converting Christians led the Church to a most uncompromising attitude towards them. Christians were forbidden to act as servants or nurses to Jews ; and at the Lateran Council of 1215, the Jews all over Europe were bidden to wear a distinctive badge, which in England took the form of a piece of yellow taffety in the shape of the Tables of the Law. Stephen Langton even went so far as to forbid any intercourse whatsoever with Jews, and even the sale to them of the necessities of life.

From this time onwards the condition of the unhappy Jew grew steadily worse. Popular indignation was stirred up against them, as it still is in the more backward parts of Europe, by stories of Christian children murdered by them at the Feast of the Passover. In 1144 a boy named William disappeared at Norwich, and the Jews were accused of his murder. He was canonised as a martyr and thousands flocked to worship at his shrine. He was the first of a long list of imaginary victims and martyrs : Harold of Gloucester in 1168, Robert of Edmondsbury in 1181, a nameless boy in London in 1244, and finally the most famous of all, S. Hugh of Lincoln in 1255. To possess a martyr of this kind was a source of great wealth to any church from the gifts of pilgrims, and so the myths were encouraged. There is no doubt whatever that in most cases these charges against the

Jews were based on the flimsiest possible evidence, though it is doubtful whether charges so frequent and in some cases so circumstantial, were utterly baseless. As we have seen in the case of the Templars, strange religious cults spread over Europe underground in the Thirteenth Century : possibly human sacrifice had its place in them.

Again, the monarchy, to which the Jews had looked for protection in the Twelfth Century, led the way in oppressing them. The story of John drawing a tooth a day from the Bristol Jew till he gave up his treasure is well known. Henry III. oppressed them on religious grounds, and the strict supervision of all their business by the Exchequer, together with the attitude of towns which obtained charters forbidding Jews to reside in their precincts, rapidly reduced them to poverty. In 1253 the Chief Rabbi begged permission that the whole Jewry might be allowed to migrate to the dominions of some prince who knew what mercy meant. Other Jews met poverty and persecution with scorn and defiance. One Jew at Oxford mocked at the reputed miracles wrought at S. Frideswide's tomb, pretending to be lame and then walking. Another Jew in the same town rushed out of the crowd that was watching a religious procession, tore the crucifix out of the crucifer's hands and trampled it under foot.

At last matters reached a crisis when Edward I., fresh from his crusade in 1274, forbade all usury, Jewish as well as Christian. This drove some Jews to circumvent the law, and others to engage in coin clipping. At last, in 1290, in response to a papal bull, Edward issued his Decree of Expulsion by which all the English Jews, numbering some 16,000, were compelled to leave the country by All Saints' Day (November 1). Henceforth,

till the time of Oliver Cromwell, the Jew only existed in England more or less furtively and in disguise. And his financial services were rendered by the great banking houses of Northern Italy, the memory of whose activities are still preserved by the many Lombard Streets to be found in the old towns of England.

CHAPTER VI

THE BLACK DEATH

§ 1. Medieval Civilisation at its zenith in the early Fourteenth Century.
- (*a*) Architecture.
- (*b*) Chivalry.
- (*c*) Literature.
  - (i) Chaucer.
  - (ii) The Authors of *Piers Plowman*.
  - (iii) Gower.

§ 2. The Course of the Black Death.
- (*a*) Origin and Nature of the Disease.
- (*b*) Estimated Mortality in England.
- (*c*) Types of People chiefly affected.

§ 3. Results of the Black Death.
- (*a*) Economic.
  - (i) Shortage of Labour and High Wages.
  - (ii) Statute of Labourers, etc.
  - (iii) Land and Stock Leases.
  - (iv) Sheep Farming.
- (*b*) Cultural.
  - (i) Corruption of the Church—Evidence of Contemporary Literature.
  - (ii) Decline of Intellectual Life.
  - (iii) Increase of Superstition.
  - (iv) Decline of Architecture—The Perpendicular Style.

§ 1. Medieval civilisation reached its zenith during the earlier half of the Fourteenth Century. It was shattered almost beyond hope of repair by a series of disasters, of which the Black Death was the most powerful, and the

Hundred Years War the most persistent. Ever since the revival of learning in the Sixteenth Century it has been the custom to judge the civilisation of the Middle Ages by the war-devastated, pestilence-stricken remnants of it that survived into the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. The Middle Ages, therefore, have until recently received but scant justice. They have been contemptuously dismissed as 'dark ages,' from which nothing is to be learnt that has any bearing upon modern life. It is only during the present century that it has been fully realised that the study of medieval civilisation as it existed before the Black Death has a very different tale to tell; that the Middle Ages had a civilisation as rich and as real in its own characteristic way as that of Greece, or of Rome, or of Modern Europe. A brief survey of this civilisation will pick out three landmarks: architecture, chivalry and literature.

(*a*) Architecture, as has already been pointed out in the first chapter, was medieval man's own characteristic means of self-expression; and by the Fourteenth Century it had undergone a process of evolution, so rapid and so radical, as to bear not the faintest family likeness to its Norman ancestor. The first and greatest step in the change took place about the end of the reign of Henry II., when Norman Architecture gave way to that style which is commonly known as the Early English or the First Pointed Style. The most superficial characteristic of this style is the pointed arch which replaced the Norman semi-circle. The origin of this pointed arch is one of the riddles of history. Pointed arches were known in various styles of Oriental architecture, and they appeared in France a little earlier than they did in England. The obvious guess is to suppose that they were introduced by

crusaders from the East ; but there is more evidence to show that the pointed arch of Gothic architecture was an independent invention of the West. It was every architect's ambition to build a church entirely of stone ; and the difficulty of vaulting large spaces with semi-circular arches probably led to the invention of the pointed arch. Its great advantage for ribbed vaulting is, of course, that pointed arches of the same height can be erected over varying widths. From the vault the pointed arch appeared in the window, and the narrow, sharply-pointed ' Lancet' window took the place of the semi-circular Norman one. These lancet windows were grouped together in twos or threes, or larger numbers, as in Salisbury Cathedral.

The deepest difference between Early English and Norman architecture is not, however, the pointed arch, but the development of the buttress. The Norman architect built all his walls thick and massive everywhere, whether they had to bear a heavy strain or not. The Early English architect studied the strain of vaulted roof and of tower and, knowing exactly where it fell, built buttresses to receive it. The Early English church, therefore, stands on buttresses, the walls bearing hardly any strain at all. It was therefore possible to allow immensely more space for windows. The fundamental difference, then, between a Norman church, such as Hereford Cathedral, and an Early English one, such as Salisbury Cathedral, is, that Hereford is dark with a few small windows in immensely thick walls, whilst Salisbury has its walls almost entirely composed of windows, separated by slender and graceful but strong buttresses. As engineering skill advanced in the course of the Thirteenth Century the buildings became ever higher and

higher, expressing in stone the soaring grandeur of medieval man's Heavenward aspirations. The vaulted roof of the nave was supported by flying buttresses, which carried the thrust on to certain selected buttresses in the walls of the side aisles, thus leaving the clerestories free from all weight and free to be filled with windows. Westminster Abbey, which was rebuilt by Henry III. and has come down to us substantially unchanged, is a well-known example of the Early English style.

Most of the older books of Gothic architecture regard the Early English style as coming to an end and being replaced by the Second Pointed or Decorated style at the beginning of the Thirteenth Century. But there is really no such dividing line between the two styles as there is between Norman and Early English. The Decorated style is simply a gradual development from the Early English—a development more gradual than that of a man from a boy. It is, therefore, quite arbitrary to choose a date and say here the Early English style ceased and the Decorated style began. Also, the names 'First Pointed,' 'Second Pointed,' etc., turn on a fallacy —that the more obtuse the point of the arch the more recent the style to which it belongs. It is perfectly true that the average Early English window has a more acute point to its arch than the average Decorated window, and that the average Decorated window has a more acute point to its arch than the average Perpendicular window. But it must be remembered that pointed arches of all degrees of obtuseness are found almost from the earliest days of Early English architecture. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the date of an arch can be fixed merely by a consideration of the width of its span in proportion to its height. The real

criterion is the mouldings and other details of the decoration.

The gradual transition from Early English to Decorated architecture may be seen most easily in window tracery. Originally, at the beginning of the Thirteenth Century, two or three lancet-shaped windows would be placed side by side, with a pointed arch above to unify them. The next step would be to cut a circle above the window within the arch. Then the circle would be 'foliated,' that is, ornamented with 'cusps'; and other holes would be cut between the circle and the arch, thus forming the earliest kind of tracery, plate-tracery as it is called to distinguish it from bar-tracery, which took its place at the end of the Thirteenth Century, and which is regarded as a characteristic of the Decorated style. The distinction between these two kinds of tracery is a simple one. Tracery regarded as cut out of a solid arch is plate-tracery. Tracery regarded as placed in an empty arch is bar-tracery. Bar-tracery of the early Fourteenth Century was mostly of a geometrical kind, like the north windows of the chancel of Merton College chapel, Oxford. All the designs are such as could be made by a quite obvious use of ruler and compasses. As the century advanced towards the Black Death the geometrical designs were discarded for a more faithful imitation of the wavy lines of nature in a most luxuriant variety. At the same time the designs on the capitols of pillars, which in the Early English style had been rather conventional and sparing, were now faithful imitations of nature, and foliage with all the curves and natural beauty of the original was cut in stone with an abundance and a variety of design that vied with nature in her most prodigal moods. The general effect of a great early Fourteenth

An example of 'Early English' architecture: the West Front of Salisbury Cathedral. It was begun in 1220 by Bishop Richard Poore, and finished by his successor Giles de Bridport, and consecrated in 1258. The smaller windows on the right and left are examples of early 'plate' tracery.

Century church is that of a glade in some vast forest. The windows with their tracery suggest the overarching branches of the trees, and the stained glass is suggestive of the sky and the sunlight gleaming through the leaves. The clustered pillars and many ribbed vaults above, with their profusion of foliage, combine to complete the illusion of giant trees, like the trees of the forest glades, where the pagan ancestors of these medieval church-builders had worshipped their gods. Each detail of a Decorated church was perfect in itself. The smallest wrinkle in the skin of some gargoyle, hidden in a place where no human eye would see it, was completed with a care that showed that the workman thought that God would see it, if man did not ; or showed that he took an artist's pride in his work for its own sake. Moreover, the perfection and abundance of detail all went to make up that perfect unity which is the characteristic of all great art. They never detract from, but rather add to, the massiveness and grandeur of the general effect. For size and for beauty and, above all, for superabundant variety of design the architecture of the Fourteenth Century utterly outclasses all the architectural efforts of mankind in classical or in modern times.

(*b*) As church architecture best expressed the aspirations of the medieval mind in art, so chivalry expresses them in the conduct of life. Chivalry reached its maturity in the earlier half of the Fourteenth Century, and soon afterwards, like everything mature, it began to decay. It has been the custom of several writers of the Nineteenth Century, notably Freeman and John Richard Green, to decry chivalry ; and there is much reason in what they say. Chivalry often tended to increase class distinctions and to make the knight look down upon all

who were not of his order. He treated his equals with courtesy after taking them in battle, as the Black Prince did King John after the Battle of Poitiers (1356); but he rode down and trampled under foot the common people, with an utter disregard of their lives and property, much as the same prince a few years later treated the rebellious citizens of Limoges. Again, chivalry led to a vast amount of useless warfare, waged in order that noble knights, like Edward III. and his court, might show their prowess. Again, the high place of religion and of women in chivalry was often compatible in practice with the grossest immorality.

When considering facts of this kind to the discredit of chivalry, we must remember that history is a record of evolution, and that chivalry was not perfect any more than any stage in the evolution of anything is perfect. But chivalry demands our respect as something better than that which it succeeded, viz. the brutal warfare, cruelty, rapine and treachery of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Moreover, an ideal like that of chivalry set before the minds of men in the songs of the Troubadours in the ceremonial of knighthood and of the tournament, and in the ordinances of the Church, has a real value, in spite of the fact that it may be too high for man to attain to it. It leads man to a higher level than that which he would, without it, have reached. Its growing influence may be seen especially in three departments of life.

In the first place, it may be seen in the enormously mitigated brutalities of war. At the time of the Norman Conquest war, as may be seen from many a gruesome picture in the Bayeux Tapestry, was an exhibition of unmitigated brutality, which spared neither man nor child, and did not disdain to mutilate even the lifeless

body of a fallen enemy. For more than a century after the Conquest the annals of England were stained by stories of the most atrocious treachery on the part of the greatest nobles of the land. Thus, for instance, in the year 1176, William de Braose invited a number of Welsh chieftains to a great banquet in the castle of Abergavenny. He requested them to leave behind their weapons. The chieftains relying on his plighted word did so, and he had them all slain in cold blood (Matthew Paris, vol. ii. p. 297, in "the Rolls Series"). It is true that this deed took place on the wild Welsh border; and that William de Braose's uncle had been killed by Welshmen the previous Easter. None the less, the deeds of King John were equally treacherous, and without any such defence being possible; and such a deed of treachery would have been almost unthinkable during the Hundred Years War. The word of a knight had become a sacred thing, and war had become a game in which there were very definite rules and courtesies. When, for instance, during an attempt on Calais in 1350, Edward III. overcame a distinguished French knight, Eustace de Ribaumont, in single combat, he was so pleased that he set Eustace free and gave him a handsome chaplet of pearls. Knights taken in battle were treated with all possible courtesy, and given the pick of quarters. After Poitiers, which has just been alluded to, when the Black Prince had King John of France a captive, he waited on him at table as if he were the king's page. A battle, in fact, in the Fourteenth Century was hardly more dangerous or more arduous for the knights engaged in it than a tournament held to celebrate some great festival.

Then, again, the influence of chivalry meant an increased regard for religion. During the Crusades the

religious side of chivalry was rapidly developed, largely under the influence of the military orders. The knights swore to defend Holy Church, and an analogy was drawn between the knight and the priest. The creation of a knight was accompanied by an elaborate system of religious ceremonial. The squire to be knighted spent a vigil before the altar of the Church. He was given a ceremonial bath as a symbol of purity. He confessed and received Communion, and his sword was solemnly blessed by the priest. The word of a knight was regarded as the highest possible pledge of truth. When King John of France was released on parole and could not pay the promised ransom, he returned to London and passed the rest of his life in captivity. The Christian doctrine of equality was also strikingly exemplified in chivalry. All knights were equal socially; the greatest of the emperors and the poorest of military tenants were equals in knighthood. Even in the decadence of chivalry at the end of the Middle Ages, a great king like Francis I. of France was proud to be dubbed knight by Bayard, the pattern of knightly excellence.

Lastly, chivalry did an immense work in raising the status of woman. The knightly ideal was absolute purity and an unmeasured veneration for chastity. Every true knight's duty was to love, but his love was an ideal thing that might be borne with perfect propriety to a married woman, or a woman far superior in age or social status to the lover. He wore her 'favours' in battle and strove for her approval as for the most precious thing on earth. The adoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary imported into chivalry a regard for woman that changed her from the mere chattel and household drudge of previous ages into a very goddess whose word was law.

The ancient world with all its civilisation knew nothing of the real equality of the sexes, neither would the modern world know anything of it but for the interposition of chivalry in the Middle Ages. The fact that chivalry decayed into the ridiculous bombast burlesqued by Cervantes in the Sixteenth Century, must not blind us to the fact that Fourteenth Century chivalry had a most important place in the social evolution of Modern Europe.

(*c*, i) A great age always has its greatness reflected in its literature ; and if any proof were needed to show that the Fourteenth Century was the zenith of medieval civilisation, it would consist in pointing out that English poets, almost silent for centuries, burst forth into song in this age, and then relapsed again into silence for a century and more, till the beginning of the Modern Age. The greatest to break the long silence was Chaucer, who for the first time raised England to the rank of one of the foremost literary countries. He is the earliest English poet whose works can be read, not for purposes of linguistic or archaeological research, but for their own sake as delightful literature. As Chaucer was only a child at the time of the outbreak of the Black Death, it will be convenient to consider the picture he gives of the social life of the times later on. We must here confine ourselves to a brief consideration of his biography and writings. Geoffrey Chaucer was probably born about the year 1340. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner of Thames Street, and a man of considerable property in Aldgate, London, and in Ipswich. He used armorial bearings and, therefore, had some pretensions to noble blood. He was also connected with the court of Edward III., and succeeded in gaining for Geoffrey a place as page in the household of Edward's second son, Lionel, Duke of

Clarence. Geoffrey took part in Edward's invasion of France in 1359, and was ransomed by the king in 1360. In 1367 he received a pension of twenty marks a year as valet of the king's chamber. During the following twelve years he was four times sent on diplomatic missions abroad, and during two at least of these visited Italy, at that time the fountain head of European literature. His works show the vast debt, both in the form and in the matter of his compositions, to Italy. Chaucer enjoyed the favour of Richard II., who in this case, as so often elsewhere, showed himself far in advance of most of his subjects in his fondness for literature and art. The poet's fortunes ebbed and flowed with those of the king, but on the accession of Henry IV. he was lucky enough to win his favour—favour which is not surprising if, as is supposed, Chaucer married a sister of John of Gaunt's third wife, Catherine Swinford. Chaucer died in 1400 in a house at Westminster, which he had taken not long before.

The works of Chaucer[1] have been allotted to three periods in his life. First, is an early period, in which French influence predominates, and to this belongs the translation of the famous *Roman de la Rose*, which is probably a genuine work of Chaucer. Next comes the middle period of his literary life, in which he was dominated by Italian influences, due doubtless to his travels. His *Troilus and Cressid* is taken from Boccaccio, but improved by Chaucer's genius for vivid character sketches. Similarly, his *Hous of Fame* seems to have been suggested by a study of Dante, but it is

[1] A handy complete volume of Chaucer's works is that edited by Pollard, Heath, Liddle and M'Cormick in "Macmillan's Globe Library," new ed., 1923.

an original piece of work that bears the complete stamp of Chaucer's dry humour and satirical power.

In his third literary period Chaucer discards foreign influences and becomes thoroughly English. To this belongs, what by common consent has been regarded as his greatest work, the *Canterbury Tales*. The idea of issuing a collection of tales was not, of course, original. Chaucer may have owed the idea to the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. But his originality comes in the setting of the tales. The tellers of the tales are pilgrims, who set out from the Tabard Inn, at Southwark, on the pilgrimage to the most famous shrine in England, that of S. Thomas Becket at Canterbury. Now a pilgrimage was the one function in medieval life that would bring people of all the social castes together on a footing of equality ; and so Chaucer's scheme enabled him to give vivid character sketches of thirty-three people, who were all England in epitome. Harry Bailey, the host of the Tabard Inn, suggests that each pilgrim should tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two or more on the way home. He offers to accompany them himself at his own expense and judge who should tell the best tale. The winner was to be feasted on their return to the Tabard at the expense of the rest. The full complement of tales was never written, but twenty-four tales, or fragments of tales, have come down to us. Some of them are old poems of Chaucer inserted in the collection ; others were specially written for the *Canterbury Tales*. The plots of the tales Chaucer derived from many sources, Boccaccio and Ovid being perhaps the most prominent. But it is only the bare plot that is borrowed, much as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was borrowed from Holinshed's Chronicle. Every tale leaves the impress of

Chaucer's shrewd dry humour, and of his delightful power of sketching the characters in the tales, and of making the character of the tellers themselves emerge from their tales. The *Canterbury Tales* show at its best Chaucer's love of Nature, and his power of expressing that love in easy-flowing melodious verse.

(ii) Contemporary with Chaucer, but, on the whole, much inferior in literary quality, are the various editions of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*.[1] The earliest edition of this, the so-called 'A' text, is judged by internal evidence to have been issued about 1362. It consists of a prologue and eight passus or cantos. In the prologue the author represents himself as weary and forwandered and falling asleep on the Malvern Hills. There he sees in a dream a vision of the world in guise of a "field full of folk." People of all kinds are there, rich and poor, saints and sinners, living as they live in the world. On one side of them is a cliff on which rises the Tower of Truth. On the other is a deep dale, in which lies the dungeon of Wrong, surrounded by its dark moat. The description of the people he sees is wonderful for its vividness and its brief but pointed satirical comments. We see false beggars shamming for food and fighting at the ale-house, "great lubbers and long that loth were to labour"; the friars "preaching the people for profit of their bellies," the pardoner surrounded by the crowd of ignorant believers whom he deceives with his papal bull and fair speech; the corrupt priest taking his share of the ill-gotten gains, while the bishop, who is "not worth his two ears," refuses to interfere. Next come the lawyers in their

[1] See the 'B' text, edited by Skeat (Oxford University Press). An edition in Modern English has been made by Miss Kate M. Warren (Edward Arnold & Co.), with a valuable introduction and appendices.

rich robes. They are entirely bent on money-making. "You could more easily measure a mist on Malvern Hills than get a mum of their mouths unless money were showed." The hard-working ploughman, the pious nuns and hermits, the honest merchants are all represented in the motley crowd, together with those who cry aloud for sale, "hot pies," "good geese and pigs," and "white wine and red."

In the beginning of the first passus a lovely lady comes down from the cliff and says to him, "Son, seest thou this people, how engrossed they are in this confusion? The most part of people that pass now on earth, if they have success in this world, care for nothing else: of other Heaven than here they take no account." The tower on the cliff is, she explains, the dwelling-place of Truth, the father of Faith, and the dungeon is the dwelling-place of Wrong. She herself is Holy Church. "Thou oughtest to know me; I received thee first and taught thee faith, and thou didst promise to love me loyally while thy life should endure." He replies by asking her to save his soul, and she gives him a discourse on Truth, Charity and Good Works. Passus ii., iii. and iv. are taken up with the very vivid and rapid series of events connected with the marriage of the Lady Meed, who stands in the allegory both for righteous reward and evil bribery. The wedding of Meed with False is objected to as invalid, so all the people concerned make a journey, which is most vividly described, to Westminster to lay their case before the king. At Westminster the king and his court, his greedy lawyers and clergy and hangers-on, all come in for pointed and telling descriptions. In passus v., the dreamer awakes disappointed that he has not slept better and seen more in his dream. He rises

up to walk ; but before he has gone a furlong a faintness seizes him, and he sat down to say his creed and fell asleep again. Again he sees the field full of folk and Conscience preaching to them that the pestilences and bad weather they endured were a punishment of their pride. The multitude are moved to repentance, and one by one the seven Deadly Sins personified confess. Among them is Glutton's confession, which contains the vivid ale-house scene, which is perhaps the finest in the book. Finally, " a thousand of men then thronged together crying upward to Christ and to his pure Mother to have grace to seek S. Truth—God grant they so may." In passus vi. the whole crowd set forth to seek for Truth. They blunder about wildly, and after much wandering meet a pilgrim who had travelled widely in the East, but had never heard of S. Truth nor met a palmer seeking such a saint. Then Piers the Plowman comes to the rescue and offers to lead them to find Truth. " By S. Peter I know him as well as a Clerk his book ; Conscience and Kind-Wit directed me to him and taught me to serve him for ever. I have been his man these fifteen years, sowed his seed, kept his beasts, diked and delved and done his bidding in all things." The pilgrims then ask him to show them the Way. He describes the Way to Truth, namely, the various Christian virtues, in a way that reminds one somewhat of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. But they reply that it would be a hard way to find without a guide. " By Peter," says Piers, " were my half acre ploughed I would go with you myself." " That would be a long delay," said a lady ; " what shall we women do meanwhile ? " " Sow and spin and clothe the needy." " By Christ," exclaimed a knight, " I never learned to plough, but teach me and I will help

you." But Piers rejects his offer, telling him to do only those services that belong to knighthood and practise the virtues of a kindly lord.

The pilgrims now set to work on Piers' half acre, but some of them shirk their work and pretend to be lame or blind. Piers says: "I shall soon see if what you say is true. Thou who will not work shall eat only barley bread and drink of the brook. The maimed and the blind will I feed and anchorites once a day, for that is enough." Then the wasters threatened to fight, but Hunger comes to the rescue and wrings Waster by the maw till the tears come into his eyes. And he beats the rascals till Piers in pity comes between Hunger and his victims with a pease loaf. Hunger tells Piers that in case of another outbreak a line will be drawn between the able-bodied beggars and the really unfortunate. The able-bodied are to be driven to work by being given only the poorest possible food, but the unfortunate are to be given alms in charity. Hunger after some more talk asks for his dinner. And Piers, in consequence, gives an interesting description of the stock of food that has to last him till harvest.

Says Piers:

"I have no money pullets for to buy,
No, neither goose nor pig but only two green cheeses,
A few curds, a little cream, and a haver cake [*i.e.* an unleavened cake]
And two loaves of beans and bran baked for my little ones;
And by my soul, I say I have no salt bacon
No, nor a cook boy, collops to make.
But I have parsley, cabbage, leeks and a cow and a calf . . ."

The poor people brought Hunger peascods, beans and cherries, and, when he was still not satisfied, pease and leeks. But in the harvest they fed him plentifully

and put him to sleep. Then beggars and labourers became dainty and demanded fine bread and fresh meats, and there was grumbling about wages and cursing the king and his council for the labour laws. In passus viii. Piers receives a message from Truth, in which a pardon from the pains of Purgatory is granted to him and all classes of men who do their duty. The vision ends in a dispute between Piers and a priest as to the validity of the pardon. While this was going on the dreamer awoke to find that it was noontime, and he himself meatless and moneyless on the Malvern Hills. The original work ends in a discussion by the dreamer himself on the trustworthiness of dreams and on the relative merits of good works and letters of indulgence.

The remainder of the 'A' text, namely, passus ix.-xii., was probably written a few years later by a continuator of much lower ability, who tried to imitate the original writer, but without much success. The whole poem became so popular that some time about the year 1377 another edition of it was issued, the so-called 'B' text. This consists of the 'A' text, expanded by a great number of interpolations on morals and on the evils of the age. They often seriously interfere with the vividness and coherence of the original poem; and it is very probable from the mentality and point of view of the writer, as well as of differences of dialect, that the interpolator was a different person from the author of the original poem. The poem remained so popular that it was issued in a third edition, the so-called 'C' text, towards the end of the reign of Richard II. This was probably the work of yet another poet, who made a number of alterations and omissions as well as interpolations in the 'B' text. These changes are mostly small, but not too small to hide

the fact that the third poet differed considerably in point of view from his predecessors (v. *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. ii.).

Thus we conclude that the *Vision of Piers Plowman* is not the work of one solitary dreamer, but of a number of obscure men of the Fourteenth Century, who cherished an enthusiasm for righteousness and a hatred of evil. It is a fact which helps to dispel the illusion that Fourteenth Century England was devoid of much literary ability or skill, even among the poorer classes. Until recently all these poems have been attributed to one William Langland, who is said to have come either from Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire, or from Shipton-under-Wychwood in Oxfordshire. He is said to have settled in London, and to have had a wife, Kitty, and a daughter, Kalote, to have been in minor orders, and to have earned a scanty livelihood by singing at rich men's funerals, or copying out legal documents. Statements such as these are based on a late Fifteenth Century memorandum to a MS. of the 'C' text, and on certain fictitiously biographical passages in the 'B' text, which those guilty of what Professor Saintsbury calls the 'prosaic heresy' have mistaken for statements of actual fact.

(iii) While the successive editions of the *Vision of Piers Plowman* were being compiled, literary skill of a very different kind appeared in this same period in the works of John Gower.[1] He was a gentleman of the county of Kent, and successively friend of Richard II. and of Richard's supplanter of the House of Lancaster. Like many educated men of his time Gower was trilingual, but unlike most others he used Latin, French,

[1] See the *Works of Gower*, edited, with introduction and notes, in four volumes, by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford University Press).

and English, each as a means of copious literary expression. His Latin and French poems do not here concern us. But his English poetry was considered so important as to be ranked with Chaucer's, and for three centuries Gower's work was regarded as a standard for English style. Thus, as late as the early Seventeenth Century, Gower is more often cited in the syntax of Ben Johnson's *English Grammar* than any other writer. All this literary authority rests upon his one great English poem, the *Confessio Amantis* written in about 30,000 eight-syllabled rhymed lines. At the beginning of the earlier edition of this poem Gower states that when he was in a boat on the Thames, near London, he met the royal barge and was invited by Richard II. to enter it ; that in the conversation that ensued he received the suggestion of writing a new book to be presented to the king, and that he decided to do this in English : hence the present book. It is, therefore, probable that the *Confessio* was published before 1386, when Richard began to be unpopular. For in later editions the passage was omitted, when Gower had transferred his affections to the House of Lancaster.

The poem consists of a prologue and eight books. The prologue, like so many passages of Chaucer and *Piers Plowman*, deals largely with the degradation of the clergy and people, and concludes with a moralised interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In book i., a lover appeals to Cupid and Venus to cure him of his sickness. Venus, therefore, sends Genius as a confessor to shrive him ; and the dialogue between lover and confessor occupies all the rest of the poem. Thus, the confessor asks the lover how he has used his five senses, and, then, in a number of stories, warns him against the various vices

that arise from the senses. Later on the confessor illustrates the evil consequences of the Seven Deadly Sins, by a series of stories loosely strung together in a way reminiscent of the *Decameron* or the *Canterbury Tales*. The poem ends in the eighth book with the confessor's absolution of the lover.

The plan of the work is well conceived, but it is very seriously marred by the disproportionate length of certain parts, and by lengthy digressions on subjects only connected in the most distant degree with the subject in hand. Thus, for instance, in the fifth book a casual reference to Greek mythology is made the peg on which to hang a dissertation of 1200 lines on the religions of the world. The stories in which the work abounds have no more pretence to originality than those of the *Canterbury Tales*. They are derived from many sources, in which Ovid preponderates. But Gower's style of narration is simple and clear ; and in telling a story he is never tedious or apt to digress. Though not on a level with Chaucer's humorous appreciation of character, he is sometimes superior to Chaucer in his power of arranging incidents and steadily pursuing the plot of a story. He often gives a fresh turn to a well-known story, and makes many pretty additions, endowing it with the charm of real poetry. The setting of the stories is good. They come quite naturally into easy conversational passages, which are themselves interesting, and which hold throughout the reader's sympathy for the lover.

Such, then, briefly was the state of art and chivalry and literature in the Fourteenth Century, when the Black Death fell upon the world. They are the tokens of a very real civilisation. We must now turn to the Black Death,

which did more than anything else to wreck that civilisation, and to obscure from modern eyes the fact that it ever existed.

§ 2. (*a*) The origin and causes of this tremendous outburst of plague remain a mystery. It appears to have desolated China as early as the year 1333. It appeared first in Europe in the Crimea in 1346, and was carried thence on Venetian and Genoese ships, first to Constantinople and the Western Mediterranean. Thence it spread over France, Spain, Italy and Germany; and sooner or later every part of Europe was depopulated by it. Even distant Greenland did not escape. It has been supposed that the European settlement, which had existed for many centuries there, was extirpated by the Black Death, since nothing further has ever been heard of it.

The pestilence made its first appearance in England at Melcombe Regis, in Dorsetshire, in August 1348. It spread rapidly over the south-western counties and down the Thames Valley, reaching London in November. The north of England was the last to be affected, and Scotland was so long immune that its inhabitants took to swearing "by the foul death of the English." But they were ill-advised enough to try and take advantage of their neighbour's misfortunes by raiding the northern counties of England. Retribution was swift; and the raiding army carried the plague back with them to devastate Scotland.

The outbreak was at its height in England between May and Michaelmas of 1349, the summer heat adding to its fury. The causes of the plague remain a mystery; but we are told by many authorities that it was preceded by a period of parching drought, which caused great

cracks in the earth's surface, from which a fetid vapour was projected into the air. This was followed by a period of incessant deluges of rain which caused malarious exhalations from swamps. To the panic-stricken imagination of the people the Black Death seemed to be advancing for their destruction in the form of 'a thick stinking mist.' That some changes in the constitution of the air made people more than usually liable to infection is quite probable from the fact that affections of the lungs and throat were among its earliest symptoms. But the real cause of the disease lies somewhere in the cities of the East, which have never been free from diseases something like the Black Death. The commonest symptoms recorded by contemporaries were boils in the groin and armpits, and often over the whole body, spitting of blood and a parching fever ending in delirium or apathetic insensibility. In some cases the victims fell dead in a moment without any premonitory symptoms.[1]

It has been assumed by most modern writers that the Black Death was the same as the bubonic plague, which continued to devastate our cities at intervals till the end of the Eighteenth Century, and which had its greatest outbreak in London, in 1666, before the Great Fire. Nevertheless, a careful study of the accounts of the symptoms given by contemporary writers, as well as the incidence of the plague on country as well as town population, points to the conclusion that the Black Death, which devastated England in 1349 and again in 1361 and 1369, was a disease that has been unknown in this exact form either before or since the Fourteenth Century.

[1] See Warburton's *Edward III.* (Longmans & Co.) and Cardinal Gasquet's *Black Death* (Bell & Co.).

(*b*) However this may be, a much more important question than this is—what proportion of the population of England and of Europe was destroyed by the Black Death? This is a question upon which modern scholars are still divided. When we go back to the Chronicles of the period we find men like Adam of Usk and Walsingham agreeing in the tremendous statement that only one-tenth of the population survived the pestilence. The most moderate of all contemporary estimates is that of Froissart, who sets down the proportion dead of the plague as one in three throughout all Christendom. Now, medieval historians, as is well known, were fond of gigantic figures. They often multiplied the actual numbers of an army or the population of a city by ten, not from any desire to deceive, but from a desire to give dignity and grandeur to their narrative. And we are inclined at first sight summarily to reject the statements of the Chronicles about the mortality from the pestilence as utterly absurd. But when we come to test them by other means at our disposal, we are forced to the conclusion that, perhaps after all the Chronicles are not in this particular case guilty of such wide exaggerations as usual. We have many reliable registers which throw some light on the mortality of one class, namely, the clergy. We know, for instance, that in the West Riding of Yorkshire there were 141 parishes, and that 96 of them lost their incumbents during the first onslaught of the Black Death. Or, again, in the East Riding there were 95 parishes, and 60 lost their incumbents. In the diocese of Norwich incomplete lists show vacancies in 527 parishes out of 799. A somewhat similar proportion of livings may be shown to have become vacant in most of the dioceses of England. Now, it is doubtless true

that all the vacancies were not due to death of the plague; also, it is no doubt true, that the clergy by reason of their sick visiting probably suffered more heavily than any other class. But allowing to the full for this, we are compelled to think that if nearly sixty per cent. of the secular clergy died there must have been a very heavy mortality among the laity among whom they lived. Again, we are able to obtain fairly reliable figures about some of the English monasteries. At the Abbey of Croxton, in Lincolnshire, it appears that all the monks died except the abbot and the prior. Again, Walsingham tells us that at the Abbey of S. Albans forty-seven monks died. The number of survivors is not stated, but it cannot have been large. Here, again, it is not right to judge the mortality of the whole population from that of monks, whose lives were spent under conditions so favourable to infection—fasting and close proximity in dormitories. The figures are none the less impressive, especially when we remember that in medieval towns and villages the population was huddled very closely together. When we search for authentic statistics of the mortality of the general population we find them more difficult to arrive at. However, Knighton, who was a canon of Leicester and, therefore, in a position to know his facts, tells us that in the small parish of St. Leonard's, Leicester, there were 380 victims, in that of Holy Cross 400, in the larger parish of St. Margaret's 700. We have no means of arriving at the total population of these parishes; but may well suspect that survivors were in a minority. As regards London, Stowe tells us in his famous Survey that he had himself seen an inscription on a cross at Charterhouse stating that 50,000 bodies of the dead were buried therein and in the adjoining

crypt. But it was not till the regular London graveyards were already full that Sir Walter Manny purchased this burial-place. However, Stowe's statement has been supposed by some modern writers to be a mistaken one. It seems to them incredibly large in view of the fact that when the Poll Tax was gathered, thirty years later, the total population of the Metropolis appeared to be not much more than 35,000 inhabitants. As for the rural population, the manorial records in several parts of England go to confirm the statement of Knighton—"Many villages and hamlets were desolated without a house being left in them, all those who dwelt in them being dead." As with villages, so with the sea-borne population. We are told that many ships were found drifting in the Mediterranean and North Sea, or driving ashore, with not a living soul on board.

Estimates of the population before and after the great pestilence differ immensely. Thorold Rogers thought that the population before it was not greater than two and a half millions and "probably not more than two millions." Others, like Gasquet, would put the population of England in the early Fourteenth Century at four or five millions. It has been calculated from the Subsidy Roll of 1377 that the population of England and Wales at that date was about 2,350,000. But this figure is of only slight value for our purpose; partly because it belongs to a period nearly thirty years after the first outbreak of the pestilence; and partly because it is well known that vast numbers of people succeeded in evading taxation, and so would drop out of the estimates. However, in spite of much that has been said to the contrary, we shall probably not be far wrong in supposing that the total mortality from the Black Death in the

middle years of the Fourteenth Century amounted from one-third to one-half of the total population of England and of Western Europe too. Possibly England had a population of about four millions before the outbreak, and of two millions after it. Possibly, too, the two million survivors rapidly increased during the latter part of the century, under the influence of increased prosperity.

(*c*) In order to appreciate the results of this tremendous mortality we must consider the types of people who were most severely affected. The chief sufferers were of three kinds. First, men in the prime of life rather than women and children or old men. Like the influenza epidemic of 1918, the pestilence seized especially upon the strong and healthy. Secondly, country people in rural districts seemed to have suffered even more than the people of the towns. Many modern text-books of history make a contrary statement, but in doing so the writers are drawing on their own imagination as to what was *a priori* most likely to be the case. All the contemporary evidence, if carefully examined, as well as the most striking results of the plague, will go to show that the villages lost a higher proportion of inhabitants than the towns. A passage from Knighton has just been quoted to the effect that many villages were left without any survivors, and the manorial rolls fully support his statement. Lastly, as has already appeared, the clergy and monks were probably destroyed in a proportion far above that of any other class of the community.

§ 3. (*a*) Keeping in mind the types who suffered most heavily, we may now proceed to investigate the chief results of this disaster, utterly unique, as it was, in its vast extent.

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(i) The first and most obvious result of the great pestilence was a great scarcity of labour, especially in agriculture, which then occupied the majority of labourers in this country. The beasts walked untended in the pastures for lack of herdsmen, and rich crops of corn stood rotting in the fields from lack of harvesters to gather them. The demand for labour being so much greater than the supply, the wages of labour increased enormously. In many places a mower was not to be had for less than a shilling a day and his food, where threepence per day had been the usual wage before the Black Death. Although wages did not long remain at this high level, the pestilence is one of the few events in English history which have resulted in a permanent increase in the relative standard of comfort of the mass of the people—a fact which perhaps bears out the opinion that a great decline in the population of Europe to-day would be the best thing that could happen for the poorer classes. The increase in wages whetted the labourers' appetite for still higher gains. Large numbers of them left their native manors and went in search of still larger wages. Discontent was constantly fomented by rumours of the fabulous wages received by labourers in distant districts.

(ii) The brunt of all this change had to be borne by the landlords, who sought eagerly for some escape from the ruin that faced them. Their first attempt was a thoroughly medieval one—an appeal for state interference, which resulted in the famous Statute of Labourers. Before Parliament could meet, as early as June 1349, the king issued a proclamation commanding labourers to serve for the same wage which they had been accustomed to receive in the twentieth year of his reign, that is, the

year before the outbreak of the plague. When Parliament did venture to assemble in 1351, it supplemented the ordinances by the Statute of Labourers. "Whereas lately against the malice of servants which were idle, and not willing to serve after the pestilence without taking excessive wages, it was ordained that such manner of servants as well men as women should be bound to serve, receiving salary and wages accustomed in the places where they ought to serve as in the twentieth year of the King, that now is, or five or six years before; and that the same servants refusing to serve in such a manner should be imprisoned by punishment of their bodies; and now, forasmuch as the King is given to understand in this present Parliament by the petition of the Commonalty that the said servants, having no regard to the said ordinance but to their ease and singular covetousness do decline to serve great men and others, unless they have wages or double or treble of that they were wont to take, to the great damage of the great men and impoverishing of all the Commonalty: wherefore in the same Parliament by the assent of the prelates, earls, barons and other great men of the said Commonalty there assembled, to refrain the malice of the said servants, be ordained and established the things underwritten." There follows a scale of wages and prices fixed according to the amounts paid before the pestilence. Thus, for instance, a mower is to receive five pence an acre or five pence a day. A reaper of corn is to receive twopence a day in the first week of August and threepence in the second week. The scales of wages were to be enforced by an oath extracted from the labourers twice a year. "And those that refuse to take such oath," the statute continues, "or to perform that they be sworn to shall be put in the stocks

. . . . three days or more, or sent to the next gaol, there to remain till they justify themselves."

When we read this Statute of Labourers to-day we are inclined to condemn it off hand as a fearful piece of class legislation and capitalistic oppression. But to do so is seriously to misunderstand the standpoint of medieval man. He had little idea of progress. As has already been remarked in connection with the gilds, he regarded every man as having a fixed social status in life, and every status as having a certain definite standard of comfort attached to it. To seek a higher wage than that appropriate to one's status was regarded as an immoral act, just as it would be an immoral act to allow anyone to sink below the standard of comfort appropriate to his class. This point of view was universal of the Middle Ages, and it finds quite as clear recognition in the democratic gild regulations as in this statute. Its framers were probably quite honest in the opinion that it was morally wrong for a man to seek a higher wage than that which he had been accustomed to receive.

A sounder criticism of the Statute is that it showed an utter disregard of the most elementary principles of economics. The equation of supply and demand worked itself out in spite of Acts of Parliament. A law, which it was the interest of employer as well as employed to break, was never properly observed. The employer had to pay a higher wage or else let his land lie uncultivated. The labourer, if he did not receive a higher wage than was defined by the Statute, would wander away to other districts, or to some town where labour was highly rewarded. At last, in 1361 Parliament passed what almost amounted to a fugitive slave law, ordaining that a labourer, when caught escaping, should be imprisoned

till he had " made gree " to the party from whose service he had fled, and nevertheless " in token of falsity, should be burned in the forehead with an iron formed and made to the letter F." The discontent caused by these Statutes was one of the chief causes of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

All these Statutes failed in their purpose. Landlords found gradually that enforced labour did not pay. It never does pay ; and slavery has disappeared from the modern civilised world not so much for reasons of humanity as for the reason that it has been realised that it is not economically sound. In the long run it pays to give a labourer a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. It is true that the immediate result of the Peasants' Revolt was to increase the burdens of the peasantry. But its ultimate result was the disappearance of serfdom. Landlords feared to press their unfree tenants too far. They might rebel or, more probably, they might run away. Moreover, a fixed money commutation was obviously more valuable than unwilling service that required more trouble to extract than to do the work itself. Hence by the reign of Queen Elizabeth serfdom only remained as a curious survival on certain royal estates. One by one in the course of the Fifteenth Century the villeins had their services permanently commuted. Each one received a copy of the entry in the Manorial Court Roll that gave him his freedom and arranged the tenure of his holding. Hence he becomes one of that numerous class of tenants called copyholders that have survived into modern times.

(iii) The landlords of England after the Black Death were faced with an appalling labour difficulty, caused by the high cost of free labour, and the impossibility of using to much advantage their unfree labour resources.

They overcame the difficulty in two ways, which have had a lasting effect on the condition of rural districts of England right up to the present day.

The landlord's first method of overcoming the labour difficulty was to give up farming his demesne himself through his bailiff, and to let it out instead to any man who would undertake to pay him a fixed money rent, larger than the old system would provide. The tenants as a rule had not sufficient capital to provide stock and agricultural implements; so during the century that followed the Black Death much of the demesne land of manors was let on what was called 'a land and stock lease,' the landlord letting out to the tenant not only the land and buildings, but also the live stock, sheep, oxen to draw the plough, horses and even agricultural implements. Thus the landlord appealed to the magic power of self-interest. The tenant, knowing that all the surplus above a fixed rent would be his own, would work harder himself, and use his local knowledge in beating up labour. In the course of a generation or two, the tenants accumulated sufficient capital to buy the stock and implements, and so there comes into existence the modern farmer's land lease—the outstanding characteristic of English agriculture to-day, in which the landlord supplies the land and buildings and permanent improvements, and the tenant all else.

(iv) The second method of overcoming the labour difficulty was to give up corn-growing, which required much labour, for sheep farming, which required very little. The hungry looms of Flanders were ready to devour unlimited quantities of English wool, which was considered the best in the world. And so the rural history of England, from 1349 to modern times, is the

story of the gradual transition of the country from a cornfield into a sheep-walk. It is also the story of an iniquitous system of enclosures, whereby the majority of villages lost their common land, which was the common property of the villagers, in order that the lord of the manor might enlarge his sheep-walk. Sheep farming and the loss of common land caused such a dearth of agricultural employment that the villages and rural population declined; and large numbers flocked to the towns, there to engage in commerce and manufactures, or to idle in the slums. By the end of the Eighteenth Century England had ceased to grow enough wheat for her own consumption. To-day, nineteen-twentieths of our population is urban.

(*b*) So much for the far-reaching economic results of the Black Death. It only remains briefly to consider its effects on the intellectual and moral side of English life. We have already noticed that the mortality of the Black Death was heaviest among the clergy and monks, partly, because the best of the clergy ministered to the sick and dying, and thus rendered themselves more liable to infection, and, partly, because monks and colleges of priests would spread infection easily among themselves by reason of their common life. It may be gathered from existing diocesan records that some 5000 beneficed clergy died of the Black Death. But the beneficed represent only a small portion of the clergy. There are also chaplains of many families and institutions, chantry priests and monks to be accounted for. We shall not be much overstating the case, therefore, if we accept Gasquet's estimate of the total death roll of the clerical order, including monks, as 25,000. Now the term clergy in the Middle Ages covered practically all the

educated classes. It covered almost all who would correspond to the present ministers of religion, schoolmasters, civil servants, engineers, architects, medical men, lawyers, journalists—almost all, in fact, who were not either manual labourers, merchants, or professional soldiers. To state, therefore, that more than half of the clergy died is equivalent to stating that more than half of the educated and professional classes of the country died. This is probably what happened, and the results were as manifold as they were disastrous.

(i) Perhaps the result most noticeable at the time was a rapid decline in the moral and intellectual standard of the clergy themselves. The gaps in the ranks of the clergy had to be filled—and few suitable candidates were forthcoming. Thus, for instance, Bishop Bateman of Norwich obtained a dispensation to ordain and present to livings sixty men of only twenty-one years of age. Henry Knighton says, in his Chronicle, " Within a short time a very great multitude of those whose wives had died in the pestilence flocked into orders, of whom many were illiterate and little more than laymen, except so far as they knew how to read, although they could not understand." That is to say, they knew the letters of the alphabet sufficiently well to be able to pronounce the Latin words in the service books, but did not understand the Latin language. In some parts of the country the rise in prices had sent the priests' stipends far below the level of a ' living wage,' with the consequence that few except those of the lowest education and ability offered themselves for this work. In other parts poor men were induced to seek ordination for the financial and social advantages it might confer on them. In the same way the depleted monasteries tended to make good their

reduced numbers with men of a stamp far inferior to that of those who had died in the pestilence. The result of all this was a sudden and tremendous decline in the moral and spiritual as well as in the intellectual standard of the clergy and religious. There had been a decline going on slowly for two centuries. But it had been a very gradual one. Now there came a state of affairs in the religious life of the country that shocked the courtly Chaucer, and the plebeian authors of *Piers Plowman*, as much as the austere and scholarly Wycliffe.

Chaucer's attitude towards the Church is probably coloured by the fact that he was closely attached to John of Gaunt, who desired to confiscate Church property from entirely unreligious and self-seeking motives. Yet Chaucer's "Poure Persoun of a Toun," the brother of the Plowman, is the most beautiful character in his *Canterbury Tales*.

"A good man was there of religion,
And was a Poure Persoun of a Toun;
But rich he was of hooly thought and work;
He was also a lerne'd man, a clerk,
That Cristi's Gospel trewley wolde preche:
His parisshers devoutly wolde he teche.
Benyne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitiee ful pacient;
. . . . . .
To drawen folk to Heaven by fairnesse,
By good example, this was his bisynesse;
. . . . . .
He waited after no pomp and reverence.
. . . . . .
But Christes loore and his Apostles twelve.
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselve."

The Clerk of Oxenford is also a model of unworldliness and genuine scholarship.

"As leene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was nat right fat, I undertake,

But looked holwe and thereto sobrely ;
Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy ;
For he had geten hym yet no benefice.
Ne was so worldly for to have office ;
For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fithele or gay sautrie :
But al be that he was a philosophre
Yet hadde he but little gold in cofre ;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente
On bookes and his lernynge he it spente.
. . . . . .
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche."

But these bright spots on Chaucer's picture of the contemporary clergy only serve to heighten the effect of the dark background of the period after the Black Death. In praising the " Poure Persoun of a Toun " he makes it quite clear that he was far from typical of his profession. He remarks of him as of something exceptional that he did not hire out his benefice to a stranger in exchange for the easier life of singing masses in the chantries of S. Paul's or of being maintained by some fraternity.

" He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to Loundoun, unto Saint Poules
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules ;
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde."

Chaucer seizes upon the occasion to admonish the clergy of his day in words that leave little doubt of his opinion of the morals of many of their order.

" For if a priest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste ;
And shame it is, if a priest take keepe,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheepe."

Furthermore, Chaucer's monk is sunk in luxurious living and gluttony to an extent that calls out the

poet's bitterest sarcasm. Saint Austyn's (Augustine of Hippo's) precept that monks should study and labour daily with their hands was treated with contempt.

> "What sholde he studie and make himselven wood
> Upon a book in cloystre alway to poure.
> Or swynkem with his handes and laboure,
> As Austyn bit. How shal the world be served ?
> Let Austyn have his swynk to him reserved."

The austerities of monasticism seem to have disappeared.

> "He had of gold y-wrought a ful curious pyn,
> A love knotte in the gretter ende there was.
> His heed was balled that shoon as any glas.
> And eke his face as he hadde been enoynt.
> He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt ;
> Hise eyen stepe and rollynge in his heed,
> That stemed as a forneys of a leed ;
> . . . . . .
> He was nat pale, as a forpyned goost :
> A fat swan loved he best of any roost."

Lower still in the scale of degradation was the friar. He is a 'lymytour' *i.e.* licensed to beg within a certain limited district. His morals are of the worst, and he was in the habit of bribing men to marry the women whom he had seduced.

> "A frere there was, a wantowne, and a merye,
> A lymytour, a ful solempne man.
> In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan
> So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage ;
> He hadde maad ful many a mariage
> Of yonge wommen at his owne cost : "

He was dissolute and drunken, and resembled in many respects a "tramp" of the most unpleasant kind.

> "He knew the tavernes well in all the toun
> And everich hostiler and tappestere
> Bet than a lazar or a beggestere."

His reputed use of the confessional as a means of gaining money for his order instead of repentance calls forth Chaucer's bitterest irony.

> "Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
> And plesaunt was his absolucion,
> He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
> Ther as he wist to have a good pitaunce;
> For unto a poure ordre forto give
> Is signe that a man is wel y-shryve;
> . . . . . .
> For many a man so harde is of his herte
> He may nat wepe al thogh him soore smerte
> Therfore in stede of wepynge and preyeres
> Men moste geve silver to the poure freres."

He was accustomed to trade on the superstition of the very poor in order to get their few farthings from them. Thus he would recite from door to door the first verse of S. John's Gospel, "In principio erat verbum," which was supposed to have magical efficacy.

> "He was the beste beggere in his hous,
> For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
> So plesaunt was his 'In principio'
> Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente."

Lastly, there are the dissolute Summoner to the ecclesiastical courts and the Pardoner, who traded on superstition by his sale of pardons from his wallet.

> "Bret-ful of pardon, come from Rome all hoot."

If Chaucer's evidence stood alone we should be inclined to discount it on the ground of his connection with John of Gaunt. But when we turn to the authors of *Piers Plowman*, we find that they corroborate Chaucer in almost every particular; and this evidence is strong because, as far as can be seen, they had no particular axe to grind by emphasising the disorders in the Church. They are all, except possibly one, devout Catholics who

are not opposed on principle to any of the existing institutions. Yet everything in the ecclesiastical order seems to them to be utterly corrupt. There is the same evil that Chaucer alludes to, viz. parish priests leaving their parishes in order to sing in London chantries.

"Parsons and parish priests complained to the bishop that their parishes had been poor since the time of the pestilence, that they might get licence and leave to dwell in London and sing for simony the service there; for silver is sweet" (*Piers Plowman*, prologue).

Again, Chaucer's estimate of the friar is exactly echoed in their estimate of the mendicant orders as a whole. Piers sees them in the "field full of folk," and is greatly dismayed at their greed for money.

"There found I friars of all the four orders, who preached to the people for their own profit, and interpreted the gospel as it seemed good to them; through the greed of their order they explained it as they would. Many of these master friars may clothe them at their liking, for their money and merchandise go together. For since charity hath been chapman, and chief in shriving lords, many wonderful things have happened in a few years."

The pride and luxury of the monasteries is rebuked in a remarkable prophetic passage in the 'C' text (passus vi.). Abingdon Abbey is singled out as the place where monks, strictly so called, were first introduced into England, and therefore as the representative of English monasticism.

> "And ther shal come a kyng
> And confess you religouises,
> And bete you as the Bible telleth
> For breakynge of your rule.
> . . . . . .

And thanne shal the Abbot of Abyngdone
And al his issue for ever
Have a knok of a kynge
And incurable the wounde."

There is again a clear parallel between the pardoner, the seller of papal indulgences, of the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, and the pardoner of Piers Plowman's "field full of folk," who shares his ill-gotten gains with the parish priest.

"A pardoner was preaching there as if he were a priest; he brought forth a bull with the bishop's seals, and said that he himself could absolve them of all falseness in fasting and broken vows. Laymen believed him well, and liked his words, and they came up kneeling to kiss his bulls. He thrust his brevet in their faces and bleared their eyes, and gained rings and brooches by his charter. Thus they give their gold to keep gluttons, and put their faith in such worthless fellows, who follow lechery. If the bishop were holy and worth both his ears, his seal would never be set to deceive people so. But it is not about the bishop that the knave preacheth, for the parish priest and he divide the silver which the poor folk of the parish ought to have but for them" (*v.* Warren's *Modern Rendering of the Vision of Piers Plowman*, Arnold & Co.).

(ii) The moral corruption of the Church after the Black Death is no more striking than the decline in the intellectual life of the country. So few men survived to do the manual labour of the country that fewer could be spared for intellectual pursuits. Hence we find in the late Middle Ages a permanent decline in the numbers of the clergy and monks, *i.e.* of the educated classes. The universities were so badly hit that Edward III. wrote

begging the bishops to help in renewing Oxford, which he describes as "like a worthless fig tree without fruit." One curious result of the Black Death is recorded in Higden's "Polychronicon," namely, that children in the grammar schools left off construing their Latin Classics into French, as they had hitherto been accustomed to do, and henceforth construed them into English. The reason for this change is probably that the majority of schoolmasters having died of the pestilence, their successors were too little educated, and too ignorant of French, to keep up their traditions.

"Gentlemen's sons," says Higden, "be taught for to speak French from the time they be rocked in their cradles, and can speak and play with a child's brooch, and upland men will, liken themselves to gentlemen and try valiantly to speak French to be more talked about. This manner was much used before the first murrain, and is since somewhat changed. For John Cornwall, a master of grammar, changed the learning in Grammar Schools, and construction of French into English; and Richard Pencrych learned that manner of teaching from him, and other men from Pencrych; so that now in the year of Our Lord 1385, of the Second King Richard after the conquest nine, in all the Grammar Schools of England, children leave French and construe and learn in English."

(iii) Results of the intellectual decline are to be seen everywhere in the succeeding century in the great revival of superstition, and in the frequency with which charges of witchcraft and magic are solemnly heard and judged in the greatest courts of the land. The famous case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester's wife, Eleanor Cobham, is only one out of hundreds of less known ones belonging

to the Fifteenth Century. She was solemnly accused in the year 1441 of having practised unholy rites in company with an astrologer, named Roger Bolingbroke, and one Margery Jourdain, better known as the witch of Eye. The charge against them went on to state that they had presumed to enquire of the stars concerning the destiny of the young Henry VI. and, moreover, that they had practised against his life by melting a waxen image, made in his likeness, over a slow fire. The court found Eleanor and her accomplices guilty. The astrologer was hanged, drawn and quartered, and the witch of Eye burnt at Smithfield. Eleanor's life was spared, but she was made to walk barefoot on three days through the streets of London, robed in a sheet and bearing a candle of a pound's weight. She was then banished for life to solitary confinement, which she spent first in Chester Castle, then in the Isle of Man, and finally in Wales. There were, admittedly, political motives underlying the trial. It had its place in the struggle for supremacy between Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and the Beauforts. But, making the fullest allowances for this, it is clear enough that such a charge as this would have been treated almost with derision by the leading men of the enlightened age that preceded the Great Pestilence.

In the year 1406 Henry IV. writes to the Bishop of Norwich, in view of the fact that sorcery of many kinds was rife in his diocese. (" Quia datum est nobis intelligi, quod quamplures sortilegi, magici, incantatores, nigromantici, divinitores, aristi, et phitones infra diocesim vestram existunt, qui diversa, horribilia et detestabilia indies perpetrant . . .") He directs him to arrest and either convert them from their evil ways or else bring them to speedy punishment. In the reign of his son and

grandson, prosecutions of this kind increase. Within the same week of the year 1432 are two records of orders from the Privy Council for the arrest of persons charged with sorcery. But perhaps the most famous and the most tragic of all these cases was the trial and death of Joan of Arc in the previous year, 1431. There is, of course, no doubt that a great deal of political and racial hatred entered into this trial. But the type of charges against her, which were solemnly considered by some of the most learned and experienced men of the age, throws a lurid light on the mentality of the Fifteenth Century. Thus, for instance, she was charged with having attended the nightly meetings of the witches at a fountain by the fairies' oak of Domremy, where the witches held their sabbath every Thursday night. She was said to have gone to the oak while mass was being celebrated in Church, in order to make garlands and crown the oak with various songs and ceremonies. When she returned next day she was said to have found that the garlands had been carried away by fairies. Article 7 of her indictment stated that she was in the habit of carrying mandrake in her bosom, hoping by such means to obtain good fortune. Article 20 accused her of gaining victories over her enemies by means of charmed rings and banners. Finally, Article 39 stated that by sorcery and invocation she had caused certain evil spirits to appear to the king and the Duke of Bourbon, in order to seduce them.

In the next reign we find Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, petitioning the king because she was accused of using sorcery in order to bring about his marriage with her daughter, Elizabeth Woodville. A certain squire named Thomas Wake had brought the accusation and "caused to be brought to Warrewyck atte your last

beyng there, soveraigne lord, to dyvers of the lords thenne beyng ther present, a image of lede made lyke a man of armes, conteynyng the length of a mannes fynger, and broken in the myddes, and made fast with a wyre, sayyng that it was made by your said oratrice to use with the said wichcraft and sorsory . . . And over this the said Wake . . . entreted oon John Daunger, parishe clerk of Stoke Brewerne, in the county of Northampton, to have said that there were two other images made by your said oratrice, oon for you, soveraygne lord, and anothir for our soveraigne lady the quene . . . " The charge was renewed again in the Act for the settlement of the crown upon Richard III. (1483). " And here also we consider," it runs, " how that the said pretended marriage . . . was made . . . also by sorcerie and wichecraft committed by the said Elizabeth and her mother Jaquett duchesse of Bedford."

In considering these cases we should not forget the magic attributed by men of high standing to Owen Glendower at the beginning of the Fifteenth Century, and Richard III.'s execution of Lord Hastings on a charge of sorcery (June 13, 1483). All go to illustrate the increase of superstition during the century or more that followed the Black Death.

(iv) Any decline in art after the Black Death would naturally be expected to show itself in the greatest department of medieval art, architecture. Here we find that the beautiful Decorated style of the earlier half of the Fourteenth Century gradually declined into the Perpendicular style of the latter part of the century. It is doubtful whether we shall be right in attributing the change entirely to the lower standard of civilisation resulting from the Pestilence, as the choir and transept

of Gloucester Cathedral, which were begun as early as 1337, show marked perpendicular tendencies in the tracery of the heads of the windows. However this may be, perpendicular architecture in its later development, though profuse in ornament, shows a lack of originality, a poverty of ideas, and an inferiority of execution as compared with the earlier style.

The heads of the windows are no longer filled with the gracefully flowing lines of Decorated tracery. Their place is taken by the rigid lines of the mullions, which are carried through to the architrave mouldings, the spaces between being frequently divided and subdivided by similar perpendicular lines. The desire to get a large area of glass led to the frequent use of a horizontal transom to strengthen the mullions in the lower part of the window. The arches of the window gradually became much lower and the four-centred arch began to be extensively used in the Fifteenth Century. This was gradually depressed till all beauty of proportion was lost, the arches being little more than two straight lines rounded at the angle of junction with the jambs. The windows of this period are often of gigantic size, and to-day, through lack of stained glass, often overcome the 'dim religious light' formerly associated with churches. When filled with stained glass of the proper kind, however, the effect of these windows must have been very fine, as we may gather from those of Fairford Church in Gloucestershire—where much of the original painted glass has survived.

Like the windows, the walls of perpendicular buildings were covered with perpendicular lines, because the whole surface, including buttresses, parapets and basements, were covered with stone panelling—so much so that the

windows often appear to be mere openings in the panel work, as in the exterior of the Divinity School at Oxford. In some examples the use of ornament is carried to such excess that the walls resemble a piece of wood carving rather than a building of stone. The exterior walls of Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster, are a remarkable

An example of vaulting in the 'Perpendicular' style: the Divinity Schools, Oxford. Built about 1450 A.D.

example of this. Many parts are so overburdened with ornament that the general effect of the whole is lost, and the ornaments themselves are repeated with the wearisome regularity of modern machine-made or standardised goods.

There are, however, some redeeming features in this decadent style. There are many church towers, especially in Somersetshire, with the lower storeys extremely plain in order to heighten the effect of an

outburst of gorgeous ornament on the top storey. Perhaps the finest example of this is Magdalen Tower, Oxford, which has a wonderful solemnity and repose, due in no small degree to the architect's perfect sense of proportion in everything. Again, the church porches, enriched with panelling, buttresses, crocketed canopies and pinnacles, are often very pleasing. Many such are to be found in Norfolk, Somerset, Devonshire, and Dorset. Lastly, there is the beautiful vaulting such as is to be found in the cloisters of Gloucester Cathedral, in King Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster, or in the Divinity School, Oxford. Larger spaces were now vaulted over without the intervention of pillars ; and fan-tracery, with its delicate pendants and lace-like ornaments, is peculiar to the Perpendicular style.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST PART OF THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR (1337-1400)

§ 1. Causes of the Hundred Years War.
- (*a*) French intervention in Scotland.
- (*b*) The Wool Trade.
- (*c*) Edward III.'s claim to the French Crown.
- (*d*) Love of the pageantry of war.

§ 2. Warfare in the Hundred Years War.
- (*a*) Causes of the English Successes.
  - (i) The long-bow.
  - (ii) Infantry tactics.
- (*b*) The earlier part of the War, Creçy and Poitiers.
- (*c*) Defensive warfare.
- (*d*) The use of gunpowder and its social results.

§ 3. Results of the Earlier Part of the War.
- (*a*) Possession of Calais.
- (*b*) Improved standard of comfort of the middle and lower classes.
- (*c*) Discontent with the Francophil Papacy—Wycliffe and the Lollards.
- (*d*) Discontent with the bad management of the War leads to the Peasants' Revolt, etc.

§ 1. The Black Death could never have dealt its death blow to medieval civilisation had it not been assisted by the potent agency of the Hundred Years War. This tremendous struggle, which lasted with many truces and intervals of semi-hostility from 1337 to 1453, ended in that peculiarly ferocious war at home—the Wars of the Roses—which left this country in a state of moral and

intellectual degradation, which, in spite of an advance in material comfort and material wealth, was hardly higher than that of the so-called 'Dark Ages' of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. The chroniclers either ceased to write or had their chronicles destroyed, and the great characters of the latter half of the Fifteenth Century, such as Edward IV. and Richard III., walk in a twilight gloom which historical science has been unable to dissipate.

War between England and France in the Fourteenth Century soon became inevitable, owing to the clash of a multitude of political and economic interests and of the personal ambitions of rulers. These things we must now investigate.

(*a*) The political causes of the war centre in French intervention in Scottish affairs, and in the affairs of Gascony. The great ambition of Edward I. had been to unite Scotland and England. For this purpose he had betrothed his eldest son to the ill-starred 'Maid of Norway' (1290). When the maid died the same year, his plans were shattered, and thirteen claimants sprang up to seize the vacant throne. Edward was called upon to arbitrate between them. Before doing so he revived all the immemorial claims of England to the overlordship of Scotland, seized all its strong places, and treated it, in short, like any feudal fief that had escheated to its overlord. Then he investigated the claims of the rivals with scrupulous fairness at Norham, in 1291. He soon discovered that there were only three claimants worthy of consideration—the descendants of three daughters of David, brother of William the Lion—John Balliol, Lord of Galloway, the descendant of the eldest daughter; Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, descendant of the second; and John Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny,

descendant of the youngest. There was as yet no fixed rule of succession. But Edward decided, in accordance with the rule that has almost universally prevailed ever since, in favour of John Balliol ; and Scotland was duly handed over to him.

In all this Edward was scrupulously just ; and Scotland might very well have been absorbed by its larger neighbour. For it is important to remember that there was no Scottish nationality at this time. Scotland was made up of several races differing considerably in language, laws and customs. Moreover, the inhabitants of the Eastern Lowlands had far more in common with the English than with their northern neighbours. Also, nearly all the leading Scottish nobles had lands and liberties south of the Tweed. It was Edward's treatment of the Northern Kingdom after the accession of Balliol that made it into a solid nation upon which his forces broke themselves in vain, much as the great Napoleon's treatment of Spain at the beginning of the last century raised a power that even his genius was powerless to subdue.

Edward regarded Balliol as his feudal dependant, and made his position analogous to that of any vassal lord—especially by enforcing his claim to hear appeals from the Scottish courts in England. Balliol's position with his own subjects became untenable, and he was forced into rebellion, looking for help, as Scotland ever afterwards did, to France. Edward attacked him with fury, sacked Berwick and slaughtered its inhabitants with a thoroughness that reduced the greatest merchant city of the north to the petty seaport which it has since remained. Balliol was forced to surrender, and then Edward treated Scotland just like an ordinary feudal

fief that had escheated to its overlord in consequence of treason. The government of Scotland was entrusted to Earl of Warenne and an English Council. Law and order was enforced in a land that did not love law and order of any kind, least of all of the English kind. English priests were put into Scottish livings, and English nobles were endowed with Scottish lands. This treatment roused the resistance of all the common people of the Lowlands. Hitherto, Edward had only to deal with the semi-English nobility of Scotland. Now he had to deal with the half-mythical outlaw knight Wallace, with a nation at his back. The brilliant victory of Wallace at Stirling drove the English out of Scotland and fanned Scottish patriotism into a flame (Sept. 1297). Edward's hard-won victory at Falkirk, in July 1298, and, finally, the capture and judicial murder of Wallace availed him nothing. The English armies, like those of Napoleon in Spain, held only the ground they stood on. The nation was united almost as one man against the 'Southrons.' Edward died whilst marching against Scotland to fight Robert Bruce, who had succeeded to the leadership of the Scottish nation. His son, Edward II., failed to press the war with energy, and by losing the Battle of Bannockburn (June 24, 1314) assured the permanence of Scottish independence. Then, long after serious hopes of reducing Scotland to obedience had been given up, the unexpected happened. Edward Balliol, son of John Balliol, the deposed vassal king, landed on the shores of Fife with a small body of nobles, who had claims on Scottish lands (1332). These 'Disinherited,' as they were called, marched towards Perth, and met at Dupplin Moor an army which outnumbered them many times over. By a mixture of clever generalship, and immense good

fortune, the 'Disinherited' won an overwhelming victory. Bruce fled to France, and Edward Balliol was now crowned King of Scotland at Scone. Edward III. demanded and obtained from Balliol a recognition of English suzerainty. This concession made Balliol's position in Scotland as impossible as that of his father had been. He was driven out of the country and Bruce restored. Scotland now became the scene of an indirect war between England and France, much as the Balkans during the past century have been the scene of indirect wars between various great powers of Europe, which were all the time ostensibly at peace. England supported Balliol, and Philip IV. of France supported Bruce.

Edward restored Balliol by his victory over the Scots, who were trying to relieve Berwick, at Halidon Hill (July 19, 1333)—a battle of much importance, which we shall consider later on in its connection with the history of the art of war. Bruce again fled to France, but his followers kept up a guerilla warfare with the help of the French king. At last, in 1341, Bruce himself returned and, with the help of France, consolidated his position so firmly that he could not be dislodged. Thus Scotland was irretrievably lost, and the indirect war between England and France developed into a direct one. French intervention in Gascony need not detain our attention. Gascony had been, and remained to the end, the Naboth's vineyard of one French king after another, who was seeking to round off his dominions. French intrigue there was never still. But the Gascons were loyal to England, partly because distant London allowed more feudal anarchy than Paris would have done, and, partly because of the lucrative export of wine to England. Even as late as the reign of Henry VIII., the Gascons

continued to cherish hopes of a restoration of English rule.

(*b*) The second great cause of the Hundred Years War was the economic one, that the English wool trade with Flanders was threatened by French designs on that province. England's greatest industry was wool producing. The great sheep farms of the Cistercians in the north in the Twelfth Century began wool producing on a large scale, and it had gone on increasing ever since. The Black Death later on gave a great impetus, as we have seen, to wool producing; and English wool was considered the best in the world. But England itself, in spite of the various emigrations of alien weavers, did very little weaving, except of coarse home-spun such as was worn by the poorer classes. Cloth of the finer quality was woven in the great industrial towns of Flanders, those towns whose gigantic and beautiful halls and churches still impress the traveller with memories of their former greatness. England was thus the Australia, the raw material source of medieval Europe, and Flanders was the Yorkshire and Lancashire. This economic interdependence of England and Flanders is the key to our medieval foreign policy. Historians have been prone to see the causes of our wars in the mere personal whims of sovereigns. But in most cases the economic needs of their subjects are a truer explanation. This is particularly the case in the Hundred Years War. England could not afford to see France in direct control of the great weaving area of Flanders; and during the former half of the Fourteenth Century it seemed almost inevitable that France should obtain this control. Flanders was ruled by a count, who was under the suzerainty of the King of France. But this suzerainty

did not amount to much—except in legal theory and ceremonial rights. Like all the great feudatories of France, the Count of Flanders was in practice an independent prince. But at the beginning of the Fourteenth Century the count quarrelled with his subjects. The real case at issue was that the new wine of an almost modern industrial community could not be held in the old bottles of feudalism. The count was beaten by his subjects and driven out of his dominions. He then appealed to his suzerain, the King of France, for help, and owing to that freemasonry that bound together the medieval noble classes the French king and other French nobles answered his appeal against the low-born labourers who had the audacity to defy their lord. Many Flemish towns were garrisoned with French troops till the common people were goaded into further rebellion. A great French armament was led against the Flemings and utterly defeated by their stubborn infantry at Coutrai in 1302. In spite of this, however, France continued constantly striving to bring Flanders under her direct control. And her aim was enormously strengthened by the accession of Louis of Nevers, a man entirely under French influence, to the County of Flanders in 1322. His subjects cared far more for the wool trade than for the whims of princes and rose in rebellion, only to be defeated by the forces of Philip VI. of France at Cassell in 1328. This victory placed Flanders for all intents and purposes under the government of Paris. Then the Flemings found a leader in Jacob Van Ardveidt, a wealthy cloth merchant of Ghent, who cared for nothing in politics save the needs of the wool trade. He at once made overtures to Edward III. for an alliance against France. Edward received his overtures with no small

pleasure. We have already seen what a bone Edward had to pick with France about Scotland. In addition to this, Philip VI. was striving to deprive Edward of all his ancient rights in Aquitaine and to reduce him merely to the status of a great landowner—in spite of the fact that the inhabitants of Aquitaine loved the English rule.

(*c*) The next cause of the Hundred Years War, which ought to be considered, is Edward's claim to the French crown. This claim has sometimes been treated very seriously. In reality it was merely a piece of manoeuvring for position. The claim was made originally at the suggestion of the Flemings, in order that they might escape the opprobrium and the penalties of treason attached to rebellion against their king. Edward's claim, no doubt, looks very well on paper. But it was quite clear that the French people would never accept him as their king. Moreover, French popular feeling had been supported by that curious fiction of French lawyers—the Salic Law, whereby it was claimed that France was under the ancient law of the Salian Franks, who were said to have a law that no woman could reign in Salic land. The lawyers built upon this supposed law the further supposition that no man could claim the throne through the female line—as, for instance, Edward III. claimed it through his mother. The claim would, perhaps, never have received much notice in history had it not been for the stupendous victories of Edward and, then later, of Henry V., which almost accomplished the impossible and brought the claim within the range of practical politics. Afterwards these victories made such an impression that the title ' King of France ' was retained by kings of England till the French Revolution swept away the French monarchy.

(*d*) So much for the chief causes of the Hundred Years War. In considering them we shall not be right if we omit to remind ourselves that Edward III.'s time was the golden age of chivalry, and that his court as well as that of France was fired with a great love of the gorgeous pageantry of war and of high deeds of arms. As one reads the pages of Froissart, there is constantly borne in upon us the fact that war in the Middle Ages was, so far as the nobles were concerned, a game ; and it is probable that, but for this fact, the Hundred Years War would never have lasted, as it did, for many generations. It will be seen also, as we proceed, that Edward had at his disposal a weapon and a system of tactics that would guarantee victory in the field.

§ 2. There is nothing to be gained by recounting the countless marches and countermarches, the endless skirmishes and the fruitless sieges that made up the first score of years of the Hundred Years War. What does concern us more is an investigation of the causes that led to the brilliant victories of Crecy and Poitiers during that period, and the virtual collapse of France, and of what causes further brought about the ultimate defeat of England. For this purpose we must divide the great war into two parts for separate consideration. The first part will include the conduct of the war under Edward III. and Richard II., and the second will cover the renewal of the war under the House of Lancaster, until the final expulsion of the English from France (1400-1453).

(*a*) Now England at the beginning of the Hundred Years War had about one-fifth of the resources in men and money of the French monarchy ; and a careful study of the course of the war makes it impossible to suggest that the English were very greatly superior to

the French in individual strength and courage. The English successes are mainly the result of two great improvements in military tactics.[1]

(i) The first improvement is the use of the long-bow. The ordinary bow, the short-bow, had, of course, been known in most parts of the world from time immemorial. But it had never been a very effective military weapon. It has been used by the English chiefly for hunting, and at Hastings the English archery force was practically nil—if we except one quaint little figure of an English archer represented in the Bayeaux tapestry. The Normans certainly had archers, and we are told that William caused his archers to shoot into the air, so that the arrows might light upon the heads of the English behind their palisades. However, the bow did not really count in war, as we may discover from the fact that the Assize of Arms (1181) of Henry II.'s time, while enumerating in some detail the arms which every man was supposed to keep, in accordance with his wealth and social rank, does not mention the bow as appropriate to any class. It was a very poor weapon about four foot or less in length, shooting a short arrow with such slight force as to make it of negligible danger to men clothed in any kind of defensive armour. The long-bow tells a very different story.

For the origin of this, we have to look to the native foresters of South Wales. The first record of its use is probably to be found in Giraldus Cambrensis, Archdeacon of Brecon, who made a tour through Wales in support of the Third Crusade (1188), and has left us an

[1] Throughout the whole of this section I am greatly indebted to Oman's *Art of War in the Middle Ages* (Methuen & Co.); and to *The Political History of England*, vol. iii., by Professor Tout (Longmans & Co.).

account of his journey—the "Itinerarium Cambriae." [1] In the fourth chapter of this book he describes the town of Abergavenny, in Monmouthshire, the district which in his time was called Gwent. In speaking of a former siege of Abergavenny Castle by the Welsh, he remarks on the powerful bows of the besiegers in a passage which seems to show that these were of a kind unknown elsewhere. "It seems worthy of remark," he says, "that the people of what is called Gwent are more accustomed to war, and more expert in archery, than those of any other part of Wales. The following examples prove the truth of this assumption. At the time of the last capture of the aforesaid castle, which happened in our days (1182), two soldiers were passing over a bridge to take refuge in a tower built on a mound of earth, when the Welsh, taking them in the rear, penetrated with their arrows the oaken portal of the tower, which was four fingers (*i.e.* inches) thick; in memory of which circumstance, the arrows were preserved in the door. William de Braose also testifies that one of his soldiers, in a conflict with the Welsh, was wounded by an arrow, which passed through his thigh and the armour with which it was cased on both sides, and, through that part of the saddle that is called the 'alva,' mortally wounding the horse. Another soldier had his hip, equally sheathed in armour, penetrated by an arrow quite to the saddle, and on turning his horse round, received a similar wound on the opposite side, which fixed him on both sides of his seat. What more could be expected of a balista? Yet the bows used by this people are not made of horn, ivory

[1] The Latin text is edited in the Rolls Series. An English translation is published by Dent & Co. in the Everyman's Library.

or yew, but of wild elm ; unpolished, rude, and uncouth, but stout."

If this is not a description of the full-fledged long-bow it seems likely, at any rate, to be a description of a not very remote ancestor. During the fifty years that succeeded Giraldus' visit to Abergavenny, the knowledge of the long-bow gradually spread to England. Thus, for instance, the 'Assize of Arms' of 1252, unlike its predecessor of 1188, repeatedly mentions the bow as a weapon for many classes of citizens. But the use of the long-bow required so much strength and skill that it does not seem to have been widely used in England. The cross-bow seems to have predominated over the long-bow in English armies to the end of Edward I.'s reign, though the Battle of Falkirk proved its worth ; and all through the Hundred Years War the majority of the archers were drawn either from South Wales or from the Welsh border. Their bows, when archery had reached a state of perfection, were a full six feet in length, and shot an arrow a cloth yard long. The bow was pulled out not simply to the chest as formerly, but to the ear—a movement that required a strength of the left arm that could only be acquired from practice early in life. Against the long-bow the French had no missile weapon to oppose but the cross-bow. The bow of this was usually of steel at this time, and the string had to be wound slowly over the notch of the trigger. Hence it was that the long-bow could shoot five arrows to one bolt of the cross-bow ; and as the cross-bow at its best was little, if at all, superior in carrying power, the advantage of the long-bow over its rival was an overwhelming one. So efficient was the long-bow that it held its own long after the use of gunpowder had become common and hand

guns had reached a comparatively high state of development. As late as Henry VIII.'s reign the long-bow seems to be the chief missile weapon of the English ; and even at the time of the Spanish Armada (1588) the long-bow had by no means disappeared.

(ii) Despite the marvellous efficiency of the long-bow, it could never have won the great victories in France, had it not been for a wonderful development in English infantry tactics to which we must now turn our attention. It will be remembered that at the beginning of the age we are considering the Battle of Hastings finally made it clear that heavy armed cavalry was the only arm that really counted in warfare. Infantry, it seemed—let their numbers be what they may—could not be expected to withstand the onset of a handful of fully-armed horsemen. So it remained till almost the end of the Thirteenth Century. Then came the Battle of Falkirk (1298). There Wallace's four solid 'schiltrons,' or squares of pikemen, flung back the onset of Edward's heavily armed cavalry, and though Edward finally won the day by his skilful use of the long-bow, which enabled the cavalry at last to break into the 'schiltrons,' it became clear that infantry must for the future count in warfare. Finally, the victory of the Scottish pikemen at Bannockburn (1314) over the English cavalry—the only arm that did any real fighting—sounded the death knell of the old charge of feudal cavalry. To Edward III., at Halidon Hill, especially, is reserved the credit of finding out the method of combining archery with infantry or dismounted cavalry in such a way as to make them certain of victory if attacked by a force of cavalry—even were the attackers five or six times their number.

(*b*) The first nine years of the Hundred Years War (1337-1346) is, with the exception of the great naval victory of Edward at Sluys, barren of real interest. It is filled up with fruitless sieges, marches and countermarches, and tortuous negotiations with greedy and cunning German princes and Flemish merchants. Then comes the great campaign of Creçy, which reverberates through Western Europe with the fame of the new infantry and archery tactics.

During the previous part of the war, Edward had relied chiefly on Breton and German mercenaries. For the Creçy campaign he set sail from Portsmouth on July 5, 1346, with an army that was almost entirely British. It probably numbered about 4000 men-at-arms, 12,000 archers and 6000 Welsh light infantry—in all about 22,000. Of these the Principality of Wales sent 3550 men, half archers and half spearmen, and the Welsh Marches sent 3250. When he set sail, Edward gave the impression that he was going to the help of the Earl of Derby, who was in difficulties in Guienne. As soon as he was well out of sight of land, however, orders were sent round to land at La Hogue. Froissart tells us that his object in this bold step was to create a diversion from Aquitaine by threatening Paris. Possibly Edward had the further design of annexing the peninsula of the Côtentin as a base for further operations against France, much as he annexed Calais the following year. However, it is quite clear that Edward was much more moved by the spirit of chivalrous adventure than by tactical considerations. He marched through Normandy towards Rouen, plundering the rich unwalled town of Caen and many others on his way. He found Rouen inaccessible, owing to the destruction of the bridges over the Seine,

and so directed his march towards Paris. But now the toils began to close round him. A French army, 100,000 strong, was gathering in the suburbs of Paris. Prudence dictated a speedy retreat to La Hogue, and thence to England, with his plunder. The spirit of chivalrous adventure told him to press on towards Flanders ; and her voice prevailed. He hastily repaired the broken bridge at Poissy, and fought his way across before the main French army could reach him. In four days he covered sixty miles and reached the broad river Somme, with the broad lines of bogs that bordered its banks. Every bridge was held in strength by French forces, and Edward now found himself hemmed in in a triangle, the sides of which were the Somme, the seashore and the main French army. After fruitless attempts at many points to cross the Somme he was in despair. Then he heard that the lowest ford on the Somme, that of Blanchetache, below Abbeville, where the river becomes tidal, was passable for a few hours twice a day. The ford was guarded by 2000 Picard men-at-arms and a large body of cross-bowmen. But the English knights fought their way across, supported by a ' barrage ' of arrows. The whole army passed over after them so rapidly that King Philip and his army only managed to capture a little of their baggage, before the tide rose and forbade pursuit.

Edward now retired northward along a narrow pathway through the forest of Creçy, where it was fairly certain that the French army would not follow, owing to the impossibility of deploying their forces in so narrow a pathway. Having emerged from the forest, Edward now determined to await his enemies and to fight a pitched battle with them. He chose a hillside between the

villages of Creçy and Wadicourt, upon which to await their attack (Aug. 26, 1346). There are two points in

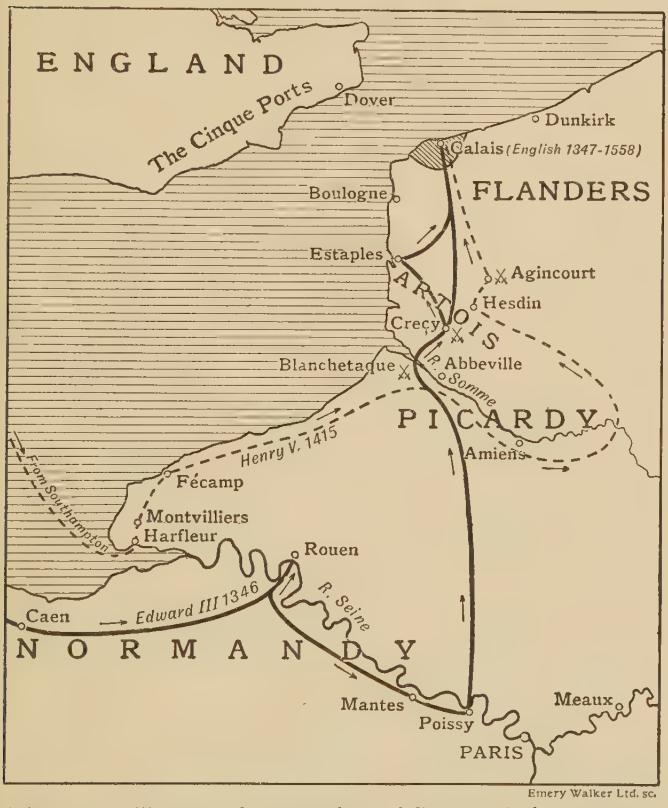

Diagram to illustrate the campaigns of Creçy and of Agincourt.

the disposition of his army which contain the secret of the new English tactics.

First, is the choice of a narrow front with carefully protected flanks. On the southern flank of his line was

the small town of Creçy, and the small stream, the Maye. Neither of these was a sufficient protection. The real protection was the Forest of Creçy, which extended for many miles, and so put any turning movement by cavalry quite out of the question. On the northern flank was the village of Wadicourt and another wood. As it is not known how large this wood was in the year 1346, it is impossible to estimate the strength of the obstacle to any attempted turning movement on the north. However, Edward's tactical skill and care makes it probable that the wood was large enough and dense enough for his purpose.

The second point to notice about the disposition of his forces is the skilful combination of infantry and archery. The army was divided into the three 'battles' dear to the medieval soldier. The 'battle' on the southern part of the line was commanded by the Prince of Wales. It consisted of about 1200 men-at-arms and more than three times as many archers. The next 'battle,' north of the Prince of Wales, commanded by the Earl of Northampton, was rather smaller than the prince's, but contained a similar proportion of archers. The third 'battle' formed a reserve in the rear rather nearer to the prince's 'battle' than to that of Northampton. All the men-at-arms in all the 'battles' were dismounted and drawn up in lines from six to eight deep. In the front two 'battles' the archers were drawn up on the wings of the 'battles,' and were some distance in advance of the men-at-arms. Froissart compares the English line to a harrow, the archers forming the projecting points. The proportion of archers to men-at-arms was enormously higher than had ever been known before. The dismounting of all the knights was also a novelty; and the position of the archers in advance on the wings

of the ' battles ' gave them an opportunity of getting any body of cavalry that charged the men-at-arms under a cross fire. It also gave them an opportunity of retiring behind the men-at-arms in case they themselves were attacked.[1]

The French army, after Edward's crossing at Blanchetache, lost touch with him and crossed the Somme at Abbeville. Its vanguard only arrived in sight of the English lines on the evening of August 26. The whole army was straggling for many miles along the road from Abbeville, and all might have been well had it obeyed Philip's orders and halted for the night. But this it refused to do, and the nobles hurried on in front, and the communal militia pressed on behind clamouring to attack at once. The disparity in numbers between the English and the French ought, one would have thought, to have assured victory to the latter. Froissart, whose figures here are probably correct, places the total forces of Edward at just under 20,000. The total force of the French cannot have been much less than 60,000, and may have been more. But they lost all the advantage of their numbers by attacking on the narrow front which Edward offered them. The first to advance was a body of hired Genoese cross-bowmen from the French fleet. Some writers put their numbers at the absurd figure of 15,000, a more likely estimate is 6000. As they went forward a sudden thunderstorm swept up from the sea and burst over the battlefield, stopping the advance for a moment. One of the third-rate authorities makes the statement, so often repeated in

[1] *v.* Froissart's *Chronicles*, cc. 128-132; a handy edition of Lord Berners' translation is edited by G. C. Macaulay in "The Globe Edition" (Macmillan & Co.).

modern text-books, that the shooting of the Genoese was consequently spoilt by the wetting of the cross-bow cords. In a few moments the sun was again shining brightly into the eyes of the French. The Genoese advanced again and let fly their bolts at long range. Their volley was utterly ineffective, most of it falling short of the English lines. The reply of the English archers was so deadly that the thickest armour offered no more protection than if it had been paper. The Genoese reeled backward up the slope down which they had been advancing. The Counts of Alençon and Flanders, who commanded the great 'battle' behind the unhappy Genoese, now determined to ride over them, in order to charge the English men-at-arms. The rest of the battle consisted of a series of some fifteen or sixteen charges, in which column after column of French knights, as they arrived on the scene, strove to ride down Edward's army. They made the mistake of directing all their energies against the men-at-arms and leaving the archers almost unmolested. The archers consequently stood their ground to the end, and kept up such a constant hail of arrows, every one of which told on horse or man, that few of these cavalry columns ever reached the men-at-arms at all.

The main stress of the attack seems to have fallen upon the southern 'battle,' commanded by the Prince of Wales, because that 'battle' was nearest to the French columns as they emerged from the Abbeville road. Once or twice a charge of French cavalry was pushed home with such vigour that a request for reinforcements was sent to the king. But Edward from his windmill could survey the whole field, and merely sent down thirty knights, under the Bishop of Durham, to strengthen his

son's position. It is here that Froissart records the celebrated saying that " the boy must win his spurs."

Before midnight the whole army of France was broken, scattered and retreating. It was not till next morning that the English became fully conscious of the fearful damage they had wrought. The French losses have been variously estimated from 10,000 to 30,000. The English lost no more than two knights, forty men-at-arms and archers, and a few dozen Welsh light infantry.

Such was one of the greatest landmarks in the history of the art of war in medieval Europe. But its full meaning was only very gradually understood. The war dragged on, after a necessary interval caused by the Black Death, for more than twenty years. With the exception of the capture of Calais, which will be considered later, it consisted of skirmishes and sieges of little historical importance, until the great Battle of Poitiers ; the chief interest of which lies in the grotesque attempt of the French to imitate English tactics, without understanding its fundamental principles. This battle came about in the most unexpected and haphazard way. The Black Prince, who was now ruling at Bordeaux, set out on one of his many plundering expeditions in the summer of 1356. He ravaged much of central France and encumbered himself with many waggons and sumpter mules, laden high with the plunder of French towns. Meanwhile, King John of France gathered a large army and hastened to get between the English, who were now near Tours, and Aquitaine. On September 17, the Black Prince, who was marching towards Poitiers, came unexpectedly upon the rear of the French army, and after taking some important prisoners, halted for the night at the little village of Maupertuis, about seven

miles south-east of the city of Poitiers. The prince had now to choose between abandoning his baggage, in order to escape to Bordeaux and fighting vastly superior French forces. His own force was intended rather for gathering plunder than for fighting. It seems to have consisted of rather more than 3000 men-at-arms, less than 3000 archers and about 1000 light troops of various kinds. The proportion of archers to men-at-arms was far smaller than was usual. The French army was vastly superior in number. Froissart puts it at 40,000 or 50,000. A more likely estimate of King John's army is about 16,000 cavalry and 5000 foot soldiery. The prince, with his chivalrous instincts, decided to fight rather than beat an ignominious retreat.

The greater part of September 18 was spent in futile negotiations carried on by the Cardinal de Perigord, who strove hard to prevent the effusion of Christian blood. Early on September 19 the battle began. The various accounts differ enormously ; and the appearance of the battlefield itself has changed altogether during the course of nearly six centuries. But the really important things stand out quite clearly. The prince's army was on a hillside, covered with trees and scrubby thickets and vineyards, and intersected by hedges. His left ' battle ' was commanded by the Earl of Warwick ; the right, commanded by Salisbury, rested on a low hill still known as the Masse aux Anglais. In the rear of these was the ' battle ' commanded by the Prince of Wales, who intended to make his way across the small stream, the Miausson, *en route* for Bordeaux if the French did not attack. According to some accounts he had already set out when the beginning of the French attack caused him to return.

King John of France determined to dismount nearly all his men in imitation of the English tactics. Baker of Swinbrook, one of the best authorities for the battle, says that the suggestion came from William Douglas, who told John that "since the present king (Edward III.) came to the throne the English have generally fought on foot, imitating the Scots ever since their disaster at Bannockburn. Wherefore he advised that the French should copy the Scots manner, and attack the enemy on foot rather than on horseback." In any case, John was aware that the English victory at Creçy was due in some measure to their fighting on foot, and probably imagined that this was the whole secret. He failed to see that the analogy between his force and that of the English at Creçy broke down in several most important places. First, he was the attacker, whereas the English had been on the defensive. Secondly, the armour of men-at-arms was extremely heavy at this period, and not at all suitable for men scrambling over difficult ground to attack an enemy a mile away. Thirdly, he had not got the long-bow. Lastly, he did not realise that the success of English tactics did not depend either on fighting on foot or on archery singly; but on the proper combination of the two. He had about 2000 cross-bowmen, but he so mixed them up with the men-at-arms of his first 'battle' that they had no opportunity of checking the English archers.

The first to attack the English lines were 300 knights whose purpose was to engage them till the main body of the army arrived. They were mostly shot down by archers concealed behind hedges on their flanks. They were followed by a great body of German men-at-arms, also on horseback, and a fierce fight raged along the

English line. The Earl of Oxford, however, sent a strong force of archers into the low-lying marshes of the Miausson stream, at right angles with the English line, where they could not be followed by cavalry. These kept up such a hail of arrows upon the German flank that they retired in disorder. Now came the bulk of the French army—all dismounted, as we have seen. The first ' battle ' of dismounted men, commanded by the Dauphin, engaged the English all along their line so fiercely that the Prince of Wales had to send the men of his ' battle ' to the front—all except 400, whom he kept as a last reserve. At last, after a tremendous struggle, the Dauphin's men retired before the stern resistance of the English. This retirement had such an effect on the next ' battle,' commanded by the Duke of Orleans, that almost the whole ' battle,' accompanied by the Duke himself, fled from the field without striking a blow. It was now the turn of the last, and very much the largest, ' battle ' of the French army to enter the conflict. This was commanded by John himself, who still had hopes of victory, his own ' battle ' being quite as large as the English army, where the casualties had been very high. Moreover, the English archers were getting very short of arrows.

The Black Prince, seeing that John's ' battle ' was the last of the French army, now resolved on a bold step. He put his reserve of 400 men into the front line, formed his whole army into a single mass, and charged down the slope upon the advancing troops of John. Before doing so he sent the Captal de Buch, with a slender force of 60 men-at-arms and 100 archers round the ' Masse aux Anglais,' so that they might be unseen by the French army and fall on their flank and rear. The shock of the

English army and John's division was tremendous, and the issue of the fight lay long in the balance, which was finally tilted in favour of the English by the Captal de Buch's detachment. The French imagined it to be a large force, and many hastened to retreat towards Poitiers. John himself fought gallantly, surrounded by the best of his vassals, and was finally taken prisoner.

The French losses were remarkable for the proportion of prisoners to killed. The killed amounted to about 2500. The prisoners somewhat exceeded this number, and included many of the greatest nobles of France. The English loss is stated by Lord Burgersh, in a letter written on the evening of the battle, to amount to four men-at-arms and sixty others—figures incredibly small considering the fierce nature of the fighting, which lasted with little intermission from the hour of Prime to the hour of Vespers.

(*c*) After this crushing victory the French did not adventure a battle in the open field for two generations. The war went on with little intermission all the time, the Peace of Brètigny (1360) being only a truce, which was never fully observed. The French confined themselves to defensive warfare—a kind of warfare peculiarly effective at the end of the Fourteenth Century, because the art of fortification had enormously outstripped the besiegers' art. In order to understand this very important point, we must consider shortly the stages in the development of the Fourteenth Century castle from its rude Norman predecessor.

The Norman castle was usually an extremely simple affair, as we have seen in Chapter I. It was often no more than a solid square tower, called the keep, surrounded by a circle of wooden palisading or a fairly low

stone wall. Sometimes it consisted merely of a so-called 'shell keep,' that is, a fairly strong wall drawn round the top of a mound so as to enclose a courtyard within. Outer defences were added gradually, in order to impede access to the keep. But these were often of the simplest kind, till the Crusades put Western soldiers in touch with the magnificent fortifications of the Greek emperors. From these they learnt the value of a concentric system of defences, and of bastions emerging at intervals from a length of wall, so that the attackers of any part of it would come between a double flanking fire from, at least, two bastions. As the Crusades declined, the need of holding points of vantage with a very small body of men led to a wonderful perfecting of the art of castle building. It is often said that the famous Edwardian castles of England are a result of the knowledge picked up by Edward I. on his crusade. This cannot be strictly true, for Caerphilly Castle, a perfect example of the 'Edwardian' type, was finished by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, before Edward I. came to the throne. Also, the Tower of London was transformed from a Norman solid keep into a fortress of the Edwardian type by the building of a series of outer defences, during the reign of Henry III. The Thirteenth Century castle was, in fact, the result of a gradual development all over Western Europe, which reached a state of perfection by the time of the Hundred Years War. The typical fortress of this period would consist, first of all, of a broad moat. Then would come the outer defence, a great length of wall, enclosing the outer bailey, flanked at intervals by round bastions, which were supposed to resist the battering ram and the mine better than the old square towers of the Normans. Every bastion would be surmounted by

a bretache, or brattice, *i.e.* a hoarding of wood work projecting outside the stonework of the tower, and supported by beams of wood or corbels of stone built into the wall. The bretache enabled the garrison to drop missiles on to the ground at the foot of the tower, and thus prevent the walls from being tampered with at close quarters. One of the few surviving bretaches is to be found complete with its roof at the famous Castle of Coucy in Eastern France. Within the outer bailey would be a similar ring of wall, flanked at intervals with bastions, and perhaps surrounded by another moat. Within that might be another, and within that yet another line of defence, the whole sometimes centering in a massive keep. The spaces between the various rings of walls were broken up by cross divisions, so as to isolate a storming party which might have made a breach in the outer defences. Such a storming party, having poured through a breach, would find themselves enclosed in a rectangle, composed of high walls, from three, at least, of which they would be under a most deadly fire. They would probably have to rush out again through the breach to escape almost certain annihilation.

The gateway which gave admittance to a castle was a feature upon which a world of ingenuity was expended. First, came an outer defence on the further side of the moat, called the barbican, the purpose of which was to defend access to the drawbridge if it were let down for a sally of the besieged. The gateway itself was flanked by two drum towers connected by a parapet or stone bridge, to serve the purpose of a 'bretache.' The drawbridge was round, and lowered by a system of chains and pullies worked usually in a room above the arch of the entrance. In front of the arch was a portcullis, which

slid up and down in a groove and was shod with iron spikes. It could be let down with such suddenness and force that it would sometimes cut a man and horse almost in two when the besiegers had followed a sallying party in their retirement across the drawbridge. On the inner side of the entrance arch was usually another portcullis, so that a body of besiegers, while attempting to follow a retiring sallying party into the castle, might be enclosed between the two portcullises, as in a cage, and killed from the room above the vaulted roof of the entrance. For this purpose the roof was pierced with meurtrières or holes, through which enemies could be speared from above, or killed by the pouring of boiling liquids on their heads.

Such is the main plan of a typical castle of the time of the Hundred Years War. But no two castles were alike; the plan of each one differed according to the nature of the ground upon which it was built. The principle of opposing a number of defences, which had to be crossed before the vital part was reached, remained always the same. Thus, for instance, one side of a castle might rest on the brow of a high cliff or the side of a deep lake, from which no attack was to be feared. In such a case, the citadel would be placed here and have no outer defences on that side. But on all the accessible sides there would be a number of defences to be passed by an enemy before he could reach it.

Thus, at the middle of the Fourteenth Century, defensive warfare had reached such a state of perfection, that the resources of medieval siege craft were hopelessly outclassed by it. The besieged had many machines for throwing great masses of stone against the walls of a castle, or throwing flaming material against wooden parts

of the structure, such as the bretaches. Some of these stone-throwing machines, 'springals' or 'balistae,' as they were often called, were made on the principle of a gigantic cross-bow, whose strings were pulled back by winches. Others consisted of a plank on a pivot between two uprights. It gained its throwing power from ropes twisted about the pivot, so that, when released, the plank would hurl a great stone placed in a spoon-shaped cavity, or sling, at one of its ends. This was one of the many kinds of stone-throwing machines called a 'mangone' or a 'trebuchet'—terms which are used with much confusion by contemporary writers. The latest kind of 'trebuchet' in the Thirteenth Century was worked by counterpoise. At one end of the plank would be a huge basket filled with heavy weights or with earth. The other end, when released, would hurl the missile in its cavity or sling with much more precision than machines worked by torsion or tension, the force of which varied with the dampness or dryness of the ropes. But none of these machines were very effective. If they were very large and near the walls, the garrison had many opportunities of destroying them by hurling flaming material at them, or by means of a sortie. If they were small and at a distance from the wall, it became impossible to direct their fire with sufficient accuracy on a single point. The whole system was extremely slow and cumbersome.

More effective, but more dangerous to the users, was the ancient ram. This was usually the trunk of the largest tree in the countryside. It was slung by ropes or chains to two upright beams. It was drawn back by a great number of men and then released to dash its great iron head against the wall. This process was repeated many times on the same piece of wall, in order

to shake the mortar to pieces till the whole rampart gave way. The garrison would save their walls by letting down thick mattresses between the ram and the wall, or by seizing the ram in a great pair of pincers made of huge beams of wood. The great objection to this kind of siege work was the fact that the ram would have to be worked with great deliberation under ramparts, from which the garrison would keep up a hail of arrows and great stones, and would pour down boiling liquids, burning pitch and molten lead on the heads of the workers. For this reason the ram was usually protected by a pent-house, the roof of which would be covered with raw hides. But the pent-house, if it was not very substantially built, would perish under the flaming oils and pitch, or the heavy stones of the garrison. If it was built strongly enough to resist, it would be too heavy to be easily portable ; and in any case it could be destroyed by a sortie. Moreover, a castle provided with a broad moat would be very difficult to assail in this way. For this reason there came into common use during the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries a great tower as high as the ramparts combined with a pent-house. The whole structure would be built of great beams at some distance from the fortress, and, on completion, wheeled up to the walls. The tower, which was variously called a ' cat-castle,' a ' beffroi ' or ' belfragium,' had its top storey filled with archers or arbalest men to engage the garrison on the ramparts while the men beneath the pent-house filled up the moat, battered the walls with a ram, or more often picked at them with a bore or ' cat,' as it was called, that is, a massive wooden pole with a sharp steel claw at the end which would be used to pick out mortar and small stones in the wall, and thus gradually

effect a breach. Massively constructed towers were extremely difficult to bring up to the walls, if, as was usually the case, the ground was steep and uneven. Lightly built towers, on the other hand, could easily be destroyed by the flaming combustibles of the garrison.

For this reason the most frequently practised art of siege-craft at the time of the Hundred Years War was mining. Usually some corner tower of the besieged fortress would be chosen, and a mine begun at a point a great distance from it, quite out of sight of the garrison. From this point a tunnel would be bored till it came under the tower. The ground would be scooped away from under the foundations, and the top of the tunnel shored up with beams of timber like the galleries of a coal mine. Then it would be filled with straw and other combustibles, and set on fire while the miners retired. Then, the props of wood which supported it being burnt, the tower would come crashing down. Mining, however, had many serious limitations. If a castle were built upon a solid rock or surrounded by a deep moat, mining would be almost impossible. Also, if the garrison became aware of the mine, their reply would be a countermine, by which they would break into the besiegers' mine, slay or drive out, or smoke out the miners and destroy their works.

When all the methods of siege-craft have been recounted, the fact remains clear that a well-built castle or well-fortified town manned by a numerous, resolute and efficient garrison was almost untakeable except by a blockade which would ultimately compel surrender by starvation. But this process might take months or years ; and in the Middle Ages a feudal levy could only be kept together for a few weeks. A mercenary army was extremely expensive, and in days when inoculation

and proper sanitation were unknown, a besieging army which sat for months before a fortress was liable to fearful ravages from disease.

This enormous superiority of the defensive had many political results of importance. It explains the futility of many of the English campaigns in France during the latter part of Edward III.'s reign and later. It explains how it was that rebellious nobles, or cities, of no great strength, could so easily defy their suzerain; and how it was that small and weak states were enabled to survive so long in the midst of greedy and powerful neighbours. It is a question of no small interest, as to what would have happened if gunpowder had not come into use towards the end of the Fourteenth Century. Possibly Europe would have split up into a vast aggregate of independent castles and cities, over which the suzerainty of sovereigns would have become an empty pretence.

(*d*) Just when this state of things was threatened, gunpowder became the predominating factor in siege warfare and reversed all this. The origin of this explosive is very difficult to arrive at. It seems to have been a gradual development from various incendiary mixtures that had been used in warfare—especially in the East—from very early times. Greek fire, a mixture largely composed of saltpetre, sulphur and pitch, was used by the Greek Emperors against the Saracens from the Seventh Century onwards. Its method of manufacture was a government secret. But it soon came into the possession of the Moslem, who used it with great effect against the crusaders, especially in the case of S. Louis' Egyptian Expedition (1249). Various mixtures of inflammable substances seem to have been known in many parts of the world from an unknown antiquity.

But all these, as far as we can tell, were incendiary compositions, and not explosives. We first get on the track of an explosive mixture in the works of Roger Bacon. He seems to have been the first to have refined saltpetre and to have definitely distinguished it from other similar salt deposits. In his *De Secretis Operibus Artis et Naturae*, chapter vi., he mentions the explosive nature of mixtures of saltpetre, though he does not lay claim to their discovery. In chapter xi. of the same work is an anagram, which, according to its most probable interpretation, is a recipe for the proportions of saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur in gunpowder. But Bacon, though well aware of the explosive nature of gunpowder, was not aware of its projecting power. The first to discover this latter power is said to have been a German Franciscan friar, Bertold Schwarz of Freiburg. But he is an almost mythical personage whose 'floruit' is the subject of dispute. Some make him a contemporary of Bacon; others put him a century later. If the latter are right, Schwarz certainly cannot have been the discoverer of the projecting force of gunpowder or of firearms, as firearms were already in use quite early in the Fourteenth Century.

The first known authentic document relating to the use of gunpowder [1] as a propellant bears the date Feb. 11, 1326, and gives authority to the Council of Twelve of Florence and others to superintend the manufacture of brass cannon and iron balls for the defence of their territory. The first mention of gunpowder in England is probably an indenture of stores in the Tower stated to belong to the year 1338. It refers to small cannon, and

[1] For the history of gunpowder, see H. W. L. Hime, *Gunpowder and Ammunition*.

makes the meaning of the term cannon clear by the reference to a small barrel of ' gonpoudre.' But the date and authenticity of this document are open to some doubt. In any case there are trustworthy accounts in the Record Office, from 1345 onwards, of the purchase of ingredients for gunpowder and of the shipping of cannon for France. This brings us to the oft-repeated statement that cannon were used by the English army at Creçy. This is almost certainly a mistake. None of the contemporary authorities for the battle mention them. The sole authority is the fairly late Italian chronicler, Villani, who mentions cannon in his attempt to account for the ignominious defeat of the Genoese cross-bowmen. Moreover, cannon, though they soon came to be used in naval battles and in sieges, never appear on the battle-field till two generations later ; and, even then, artillery was very unimportant. The first battle in which artillery had a decisive effect was Castillon, the last battle of the Hundred Years War (1453). It was not really till the Seventeenth Century that artillery became absolutely indispensable for victory in the field. Froissart is probably right, however, in stating that Edward III. used cannon the year after Creçy in the siege of Calais (1347). For it was siege-warfare that was first revolutionised by gunpowder. But even in sieges, gunpowder was slow in coming into use for several reasons. First, the early gunpowder was only a ' loose ' mixture of the three ingredients. ' Wet mixing,' which greatly improved its quality, did not become generally known in Europe till the Fifteenth Century was well advanced. Secondly, the proper proportions of the three ingredients had not been arrived at. Most early gunpowder contained a great deal too much sulphur and too

little saltpetre. Again, the early cannon were extremely defective in their manufacture. Some were cast in a solid piece of iron or brass. The powder would be rammed in, then the cannon ball would be put down the breech. An iron bar, which was kept heated at a brazier, would then be applied to the touch-hole, and there was always a sporting chance that, owing to some flaw in the casting, the cannon, instead of discharging at the enemy, would burst to pieces and destroy the artillerymen. A more satisfactory way of making cannon was the welding of metal bars together round a core, the core being afterwards removed and the bars kept together with rings of metal. This obviated the likelihood of fatal flaws in the manufacture. But even then the cannon remained almost as much a menace to friend as foe. It was a cannon of the latter improved type that killed James II. of Scotland by bursting at the siege of Roxburgh (1462). Again, in days of bad roads and inefficient transport arrangements, a large train of artillery and a store of powder was often an impediment to the quick movements of an army, of a seriousness out of all proportion to its usefulness. Lastly, the fire of these early cannon was extremely slow ; three shots per hour was about as much as they could manage. It was not till Warwick the Kingmaker battered the great castle of Bamborough into pieces with his artillery in a single week, in July 1464, that the great feudal fastness had become an anachronism.

Political power, as has been already remarked, depends ultimately on military force. The social and political results of the use of gunpowder are, therefore, enormous. The use of infantry tactics and archery had in the Thirteenth Century taken away the predominance in

war from the nobles and given it to the common people. The nobles were left with only the defensive strength of their castles. Now, the development of firearms in the Fifteenth Century took even this away from them. The result was that the kings of Europe were able to consolidate their power with the consent of the mass of the people, in spite of the opposition of the nobles, as did Edward IV. and the House of Tudor in England. Later on, in the Sixteenth Century, the fact that the king alone in England possessed a train of artillery enabled him sometimes to defy even the mass of the people as well as the nobles. Thus, Henry VIII. on more than one occasion was able to run directly counter to the desires of nearly all his subjects, and yet to die a natural death after a reign of nearly forty years. But in the time of the Hundred Years War these things were yet to be accomplished.

§ 3. It now remains to examine some of the most important results of the former half of the Hundred Years War (1337-1400) upon this country.

(*a*) The most obvious result to contemporaries was probably the possession of Calais, which fell to Edward after a long siege, as the first fruits of the victory of Creçy, and remained an English possession, long after all else was lost, till 1559. Its value to medieval England is not easy to understand to-day. Its upkeep was a tremendous drain upon our revenue. It cost about £30,000 per year to garrison and maintain at a time when the normal revenue of the English Government did not much exceed £100,000 per year. Also, the possession of Calais made a lasting peace with France almost impossible. Moreover, the existence of a veteran garrison at Calais was a constant menace to the English Government

in times of political unrest. Warwick, 'the Kingmaker,' especially, found Calais an invaluable asset during the Wars of the Roses. The value of Calais to England was, on the other hand, immense. Its possession enabled Edward to suppress the pirates of the Channel, who were one of the greatest impediments to our foreign trade. Henceforth, English merchants could cross to the Continent and foreign merchants could cross to England in comparative security. The career of a merchant was fraught with so much danger in the Middle Ages that he was able to demand large profits. Anything that added to his security tended to bring prices down.

Then, again, Calais was an immense boon to our wool trade. English kings had been experimenting for nearly a century with various methods of diverting the channel of the wool trade into certain staple-towns, where the customs duties could be levied with little possibility of evasion, and disputes settled by Law Merchant to the satisfaction of native and foreigner alike. The capture of Calais enabled the staple to be fixed in this one place, so eminently suitable geographically. It was quite close to the great Flemish towns, which were our chief customers, and also about the nearest possible place to England. The existence of only one staple town obviated the likelihood of illicit trading, and reduced the difficulty and expense of collecting customs to a minimum.

Lastly, in view of the continuance of war against France, Calais provided a base from which that country could be attacked in its most vulnerable part. One of the great difficulties of France has always been that Paris is situated so far to the north-east, perilously near a frontier devoid of natural defences. Calais in English hands was a constant menace to Paris. It was also a

possible point of junction between the English forces and those of the natural enemies of France, the Germans and Flemings of the eastern frontier.

(*b*) Another result of the earlier part of the Hundred Years War was a vast improvement in the standard of comfort of the middle and lower classes. We have already seen how the Black Death set things going in this direction. Here, as in so many other cases, the Hundred Years War seconded the work of the Black Death. The preparations for war gave considerable stimulus to trade. The withdrawal of large bodies of men from labour to the army placed abundance of employment in the hands of those who remained. Also, the enhanced importance of foot soldiers brought them a much higher rate of pay than they would have earned at agricultural labour at home. Thus, it is stated on the pay roll of the army, with which Edward III. besieged Calais, that every one of the 15,480 archers received threepence a day, and the 5014 who had horses received sixpence a day. The wages of an agricultural labourer at this time (just before the Black Death) barely averaged twopence. But these considerations are dwarfed into insignificance by the vast wealth in gold and in rich materials that flowed into England from the plunder of French towns, which were among the richest in the world. The importance of foot soldiery caused much of this wealth to flow into the cottages of the poorer classes. Also, still more, the ransoms of the vast numbers of distinguished nobles who were taken prisoner in battles like Creçy or Poitiers, brought a previously unimagined stream of wealth flowing into the pockets of English soldiers. Many a poor archer who had barely earned twopence a day in England before the war had the good fortune to capture

a great French noble and to receive, as ransom for him, more money then he had ever believed to exist in the world. The ransoms and plunder that came the way of some soldiers must have been enormous. Thus, for instance, the famous Sir John Fastolf, who figures so prominently in the Paston Letters, began life as a comparatively poor squire in possession of little more than two manors, which he inherited from his father. But during the latter part of the Hundred Years War he captured Guillaume Raymond, Governor of Pacy, in 1423, the Duke of Alençon at the battle of Verneuil (1424), and the Duke of Bar in raising the siege of Vandemont (1432). Though he complains that he was deprived of his proper share of the ransoms of some of his distinguished prisoners, he died one of the richest men in England. At the time of his death his property included ninety-four manors and four residences, including the great castle of Caistor, the foundation of which covered more than five acres. He had also £2643 10s. in money, 3400 ounces of silver plate and a wardrobe filled with sumptuous apparel. A very large proportion of this wealth came directly or indirectly from the war. Few men grew as rich as this, but many thousands of families in this country permanently bettered their condition by the impoverishment of France.

(*c*) The Hundred Years War had a further result in producing an attitude towards the Church in general, and the Papacy in particular, that foreshadowed the Reformation of two centuries later. The vast sums of money which the Popes drew from England and their interference in English affairs caused much discontent, as we have seen, as far back as Henry III.'s reign. But a great deal of water had rolled under the bridge since

then. Early in the Thirteenth Century the Papacy had removed from Rome to Avignon, which was practically surrounded by French territory, and under French control. During the 'Babylonish Captivity,' as it was called, every Pope was a Frenchman in language and sympathies, though some few might have been, technically, English subjects. The Pope, therefore, sank in the eyes of Englishmen from the august and impartial judge of Christendom to the mere creature of their enemies. Added to this was the fact that the Popes of the captivity were in great financial straits, owing to the loss of their revenues from Roman territory, and sought in every possible way to make good their losses by sucking England dry. Finally, the great moral decline of the Papacy during the Fourteenth Century, and the great corruption of the Church after the Black Death, added the stimulus of moral indignation to those of patriotism and self-interest, in inciting Englishmen against the Pope.

Hostility to the Pope found expression in 1351 in the Statute of Provisors, which forbade the acceptance of papal letters of provision and placed the patronage of any benefice which the Pope attempted to 'provide' for in the hands of the king. This was followed in 1353 by the Statute of Praemunire, which forbade the taking of cases cognisable in English courts to be tried in 'foreign courts,' that is, of course, the Pope's court. But, like so many medieval statutes, it had little effect. It was passed again in 1365, in a more strongly worded form, in which the papal court was specifically mentioned. Yet, again, it was passed in 1377 and 1390 and, finally, in 1393. This latter is generally referred to by all subsequent statutes as the Statute of Praemunire. It enacts that

" whoever procures at Rome, or elsewhere, any translations, processes, excommunications, bulls, documents, instruments or other things which touch the King, against him, his crown and realm, and all persons aiding and assisting therein, shall be put out of the King's protection, their lands and goods forfeited to the King's use, and they shall be attached by their bodies to answer to the King and his Council." By a statute of 1401 any person who accepted any provision from the Pope to exempt him from obedience to his proper ordinary was also subjected to the penalties of praemunire. All these acts soon became a dead letter, largely owing to collusion between kings and popes. Their chief importance is that they formed a powerful weapon against the clergy in the hands of Henry VIII. at the Reformation.

Just as a French Pope became unpopular in England largely owing to the war, so many English priories, which were subject to French abbies, incurred the dislike of the nation. In the first year of the war (1338), therefore, Edward " seized into his hands the goods and revenues of all alien and foreign priories, especially of the Cluniac and Cistercian orders, which were immediately let out to farm to those monks who paid a sufficient rent for them during these wars." This act, like the suppression of the Templars a generation previously, has its importance as a precedent for the great dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. There were many even at this time who were not satisfied with so small a measure ; and as the Hundred Years War proceeds, we find a growing demand on the part of many nobles and members of the House of Commons for a much larger measure of confiscation of Church property.

Remembering the anti-papal feeling fostered by the French Wars, and the lowering of the moral standard of the clergy following upon the Great Pestilence, we are now in a position to appreciate the career of Wycliffe.[1] In the main principles of his teaching there was little or nothing that had not been taught many times before by other reformers during the previous three hundred years. The fact that Wycliffe became a great name in history, while the others had mostly died in obscurity, is due more to the times in which Wycliffe lives, than to any outstanding ability of his own. Wycliffe addressed a nation that was heartily tired of papal interference, and of the corruptions of the Church; and he appealed to a powerful nobility that was hungering after Church property. Hence Wycliffe prospered where his predecessors had battered their heads in vain against the mighty fabric of the medieval Church.

John Wycliffe appears to have been a member of a well-known Northern Yorkshire family, who derived their name from the village of Wycliffe on the southern banks of the Tees. He was probably born about the year 1330, and in due course proceeded to Oxford. The earlier part of his career at this university is obscured by the fact that there was at least one other student of the same name contemporary with him. He emerges into the clear light of history in 1360 as Master of Balliol. He appears then as one of the most popular men in the university, and as one of the most deeply versed in the current scholasticism of his day. He soon figures as an absentee pluralist, deriving a considerable income from several

[1] For a further account of Wycliffe, see the article by Workman in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, also Poole's *Medieval Thought and Learning*, new edition (S.P.C.K.), and H. O. Taylor, *The Medieval Mind*.

pieces of ecclesiastical preferment and rendering hardly any service in return. Thus, in 1361, he was instituted to the College living of Fillingham, near Lincoln, which carried with it the comparatively large income of thirty marks per annum. Next year the university petitioned Pope Urban V. to give him a canonry and prebend in York to hold in addition to his living. The Pope responded by giving him the prebend of Aust in the Collegiate Church of Westbury-on-Trim, near Bristol, which was worth ten marks per annum. At the same time Wycliffe obtained a licence from the Bishop of Lincoln to live at Oxford, that he might devote himself to the study of letters at the University. Accordingly, he lives about nine years, mostly at Oxford, while deriving a considerable income from his absentee parish and his prebend. The latter, however, was not in the Diocese of Lincoln and, therefore, was not covered by the Bishop of Lincoln's licence. Accordingly, the Bishop of Worcester, in whose diocese it was, cited him to appear before him on July 18, 1366, for being non-resident and failing to provide a vicar to discharge his duties. The matter, however, died down, and Wycliffe continued to hold the prebend for the rest of his life. Pluralities of this kind were extremely common, and there were many worse cases than that of Wycliffe. But his is of particular interest in view of his later attacks on Church property, and strictures on the wealth of the clergy.

On taking his degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1372, Wycliffe entered the king's service and allied himself closely with the ambitious, unscrupulous and incompetent John of Gaunt, the leader of the party of nobles who desired a measure of confiscation of Church property —not with the purpose of raising the spiritual standard of

the Church, but with the purpose of filling their own pockets with the proceeds. It is charitable to assume that Wycliffe was unconscious of the ambition and selfishness that underlay the Duke's politics.

One of the greatest questions agitating the government at this time was the claim of the Pope to large sums of money from England. When King John made his submission to the Pope in 1213, he agreed to pay him a tribute of 1000 marks per annum in token of his suzerainty over England and Ireland. This tribute had been paid fairly regularly till the time of the 'Babylonish Captivity.' Then, the Pope being a Frenchman, the payments became rare, and from 1333 onwards they had stopped altogether. Accordingly, Pope Urban V. in 1365 demanded payment of the tribute and its arrears. On Edward III.'s laying the matter before Parliament it indignantly refused to pay. Apparently this did not end the question—as most of the older historians imagined. There is evidence to show that Gregory XI. renewed the demand in 1374. It was probably now, and not earlier, that Wycliffe comes to the front in politics upon being asked to draw up a statement of the arguments for refusing to pay the papal tribute. His statement purports to be a report of seven speeches delivered by seven lords of the Council on the subject of the papal tribute. But this is in reality only a literary device. The arguments are really of Wycliffe's own composition. Thus, he takes the doctrine of evangelical poverty, so often insisted upon by Marsiglio of Padua, William of Ockham, and the spiritual Franciscans of an earlier generation, and makes one lord deny the lawfulness of the Pope's tribute on the ground that Christ and His apostles held no property and that the owning of

property by the Church was a token of her spiritual decline. He later expands this doctrine to deny the right of holding property by any Christian—clergy or lay. Another lord he makes the exponent of another of his own favourite doctrines, that of 'dominion,' which he borrowed from Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, an older Oxford contemporary, who had died in 1360.

This doctrine of 'dominion,' which Wycliffe shortly afterwards stated at some length in two large treatises, "De Dominio Divino" and "De Civili Dominio," are of great interest as showing how everything in Heaven and Earth in medieval man's conception was dominated by feudalism. God, in Wycliffe's treatises, is the great feudal suzerain of the world. But God, unlike earthly lords, has no mesne tenants. All men are tenants-in-chief of God, holding directly from Him. All hold by the same terms of service. Thus, all are equal in the eyes of God—equal, not only, as had always been held, in the religious, but, also, in the political sphere. A man holds his political rank and power from God so long as he does the service involved in the terms of his tenure. If he commits mortal sin, he breaks the terms of his tenure. His rank and power, therefore, escheat to his overlord, God. Thus, as Wycliffe expressed it, "dominion is founded in grace." This was the reformer's method of inculcating on the basis of feudal ideas the belief in duties attached to property and privilege, which is nowadays taught on other bases. Wycliffe was, of course, careful to show that though a man certainly lost his 'dominion' in the eyes of God by mortal sin, yet God might still permit the wicked to retain their power in this world. The wicked owner must be left in possession.

" God," as he strangely put it, " ought to obey the devil." Thus the doctrine, properly understood, gave no real sanction to revolutionary upheavals. But the doctrine was soon passed on in a crude and exaggerated form to the ignorant peasantry. It was thus instrumental—though altogether against Wycliffe's will—in stirring up the great revolt of 1381 ; much as Luther's teaching in the Sixteenth Century had an indirect result in stirring up a terrible peasants' revolt in Germany.

Wycliffe's services in opposing papal claims were rewarded by his presentation to the crown living of Lutterworth (April 7, 1374). He still remained a supporter of John of Gaunt in the years of his bad government during Edward III.'s dotage. It is sad to see him an enthusiastic partisan of the wicked Parliament of 1377, with its iniquitous poll tax, its restoration of Alice Perrers, the king's concubine, and its aggrandisement of John of Gaunt by the creation of Lancashire into a county Palatine. This connection did incalculable harm to Wycliffe's cause. When Wycliffe was summoned before the Convocation of S. Paul's (Feb. 19, 1377) to answer for his protests against the possession of property by the Church, John of Gaunt went with him truculently to intimidate the court. This infuriated the Londoners to such an extent that they rose in a riot to support their bishop against Wycliffe and his hated supporter.

The same year nineteen propositions, culled from Wycliffe's writings, were condemned by the Pope, and a bull issued for his arrest. But these propositions are concerned almost entirely with the status and discipline of the Church rather than its doctrines. The teaching by which he was best known at this time was

that directed against the luxury, wealth and worldliness of the clergy, and against the interference of the Pope in English affairs. There was nothing novel or heretical in all this. The Pope's bull for the arrest of Wycliffe was treated with scant courtesy at Oxford, owing to the Reformer's immense popularity with the university. The Vice-Chancellor merely ordered Wycliffe to stay in Blackhall and not go out. Even for this amount of obedience to the Pope the Vice-Chancellor was thrown into prison by the crown on the ground that he had imprisoned Wycliffe at the mandate of the Pope. Throughout his career, Wycliffe's powerful friends at court were a constant protection to him against his enemies. Thus, at the 'Council of the Earthquake' (May 1382), twenty-four of his conclusions were condemned, but their author was left unnamed. His followers could be persecuted with comparative impunity. He himself was immune.

It was only during the last six years of his life that Wycliffe made anything like a definite break with the doctrine of the medieval Church. The outbreak of the Great Schism in 1378 roused his contempt for the Papacy, now that there were two or more Popes each claiming to be the one and only spiritual overlord of Christendom. This was still further increased by the so-called crusade of Bishop Dispenser on behalf of Urban VI. in the Low Countries. Old age, too, sometimes has the effect of making men push their views to an extreme. This seems to have been partly the case with Wycliffe after 1378. He began to deny the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist as defined by the Lateran Council of 1216. But in this case it was more as a scholastic hair-splitter than as a Protestant theologian that he spoke. He denied that

the elements at the Eucharist lost their 'substantia' when they were consecrated, on the ground that Christ's presence would not annihilate anything. In this he was simply arguing like a medieval realist against his nominalist opponents. He merely substituted a doctrine of Consubstantiation for that of Transubstantiation. A modern mind, which would reject the one, would find the other equally unacceptable. Other passages in his works about the Eucharist seem to go much further, but it is impossible to give them coherence or consistency. In normal practice, to the end of his life he did not depart far from the Catholic view of the Middle Ages. It should be remembered that Transubstantiation, as stated by the Lateran Council of 1216, was fairly vague [1] and allowed much latitude of opinion. It was not anything like so precise a doctrine as that defined by the Council of Trent of 1560. Wycliffe's doctrine, therefore, would not appear nearly so heretical to a medieval theologian as it would to a modern Roman Catholic. Yet, even in this age, it lost him the support of many nobles, especially John of Gaunt.

Another feature of his declining years was an attempt to appeal to a wider circle of mankind by the sending out of his 'Poor Priests.' Hitherto he had appealed mostly to the scholars of the university. Now he attempted to appeal to the mass of the people. The 'Poor Priests' were not laymen, as has sometimes been stated, but properly ordained priests. They were, however, unauthorised by the bishop in whose diocese they worked, and from whom normally a priest would

[1] The definition contains simply the words "transubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina" (*v.* Mansi, *Concilia*, xxii. 982).

obtain a licence. They moved from place to place carrying Wycliffe's tracts and sermons with them, clad in robes of undressed wool, and, like the disciples of Our Lord, without sandals, scrip or purse. They continued to work long after Wycliffe's death, and were of considerable influence among the common people.

His translation of the Bible was also an appeal to a wider circle, though not so wide a one as is often imagined. The mass of men, who were educated at all, could read the Latin Vulgate. The majority of men could not read at all. There was, however, a small class of prosperous laymen growing up who could read English, but not Latin. Moreover, if one member of a community could read, many others might listen while he read aloud. Throughout his life, Wycliffe had followed Ockham in appealing to Scripture. He did so on the ground that Scripture represented the terms of man's feudal tenure from God, and that every man had the right to know the terms of his tenure. Wycliffe's first version of the Bible was made largely by Nicholas of Hereford, and is an excessively literal rendering of the Vulgate into a Midland dialect. It was only after Wycliffe's death that his secretary, John Purvey, made the translation clearer in expression and more idiomatic ; and changed the dialect into the uninflected type of language common at Oxford in his day. Wycliffe's translation of the Bible has often been given a much greater prominence than it deserves. Two generations after Wycliffe's death it seems to have been almost forgotten. Moreover, translations of parts of the Bible into English were by no means such a novelty as is sometimes imagined. The most important parts of the Bible had been translated over and over again from the most

primitive Anglo-Saxon days, and one of the most striking features of much medieval literature, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, and Gower's voluminous works, is the thorough and accurate knowledge of Scripture, which everyone, whatever his social status or profession, seems to possess. The chief importance of Wycliffe's translation is that it is probably the first complete translation of the Bible into English that had ever appeared.

Wycliffe spent his last years at Lutterworth, and continued writing with indefatigable industry to the end of his life, in spite of the fact that in the autumn of 1382 he was stricken with paralysis. In Leland there is an account of his death given by one of his curates, John Horn, before Thomas Gascoigne in 1441. He stated on oath that on December 28, 1384, "as Wycliffe was hearing mass in his church at the time of the elevation of the host he fell down, smitten by a severe paralysis especially in the tongue so that neither then nor afterwards could he speak to the moment of his death."

Wycliffe's career was far less successful than it might have been, considering the age in which he lived, with its ready receptivity of his contentions against the Pope and the corruptions of the Church. This was largely due to the curious paradoxes that found a place in his career. Thus, for instance, he sought to appeal to the uneducated masses, while he himself was an 'intellectual' of the most hair-splitting scholastic type. He taught that all Church endowments should be forfeited and that the clergy should live on charity, while he himself, as we have seen, drew a considerable income from his pluralities. He sympathised with the social aspirations of the poor, while he himself lived for years under the wing of the

haughty, selfish and exclusive John of Gaunt. Again, his views lacked the coherence, consistency and clearness that would commend them to the mass of mankind. They only reached the masses in a crude, exaggerated, perverted form, far different from that intended by their author. Moderate men were estranged by the immoderate violence of his followers.

One curious result of Wycliffe's teaching was the increased importance of the University of Cambridge. Oxford's enthusiastic support of the reformer gained it a bad name as a hot-bed of heresy and revolutionary ideas. Cautious parents, therefore, feared to send their sons to the older university and sent them instead to the small University of Cambridge, which consequently grew almost to equal Oxford in size and importance. Thus, by a curious paradox, Cambridge, which was destined to become the home of the Protestant Reformation, owed its importance originally to its bigoted adherence to medieval catholicism in its most reactionary form.

Curiously enough, it was not in England, but in distant Bohemia, that Wycliffe's teaching had its most lasting result. The marriage of Richard II. with Anne, sister of Wenzel, King of Bohemia, led to much intercourse with that country. Scholarships were founded at Oxford for Czech students. Among these was Jerome of Prague, who took many writings of Wycliffe to his native land and introduced them to John Hus, under whose influence Wycliffe's teaching dominated the country and led to a movement, both in Bohemia and in Moravia, that lasted on to have no small influence in the Sixteenth Century Reformation.

In England, on the contrary, it is impossible to find more than the slightest traces of Lollardy lingering on

till the Sixteenth Century. The Protestant movement in England had practically to begin anew. Lollardy,[1] therefore, is chiefly of importance as illustrating certain phases of medieval thought, and as accounting in some degree for some of the political upheavals of the early Fifteenth Century.

After the 'earthquake council,' held at Blackfriars (May 1382), Archbishop Courtenary determined to suppress Lollard opinion at Oxford. This he found no easy matter, as public opinion in the university was strongly on the Lollard side. The Chancellor, Robert Rigge, showed a strong bias in their favour, and appointed two of Wycliffe's staunchest followers, Nicholas Hereford and Philip Repyngdon, to preach before the university. The Archbishop's commissary, Peter Stokes, went in fear of his life and dared not carry out his instructions in the face of university men, who carried arms and wore armour underneath their gowns. The Chancellor was summoned to London and intimidated into abandoning the Wycliffite cause, and into undertaking to publish a new mandate for the repression of Wycliffe's teaching. At last Wycliffe's principal adherents were suspended from their academical functions; and Hereford and Repyngdon were excommunicated. John of Gaunt would no longer protect them owing to his dislike of Wycliffe's denial of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. Most of them lost heart and recanted of their errors. Hereford went to Rome to appeal and was sentenced to imprisonment for life. Philip Repyngdon confessed all his errors, and cleared himself of heresy before the archbishop's synod.

[1] For the best account of the Lollards, see Gardiner, *Lollardy and the Reformation* (Macmillan & Co.), vols. i. and ii.

In later life he was a determined opponent of Wycliffite teaching, and became successively Abbot of Leicester, Chancellor of Oxford University, Bishop of Lincoln, and, finally, a Cardinal. Wycliffite opinions in the university were thus suppressed. They asserted themselves again in the first decade of the Fifteenth Century, but were again suppressed by Archbishop Arundel, and Oxford settled down to an intellectual torpor from which it did not arouse itself for more than a century.

Lollardy in the university was often regarded merely as an interesting intellectual question for abstract discussion. In the country, on the other hand, the practical issues of Wycliffe's teaching gained a hold on men's minds. The Lollards gained a large following owing to their objection to the wealth of the Church and the worldliness and arrogance of the clergy. Their numbers must have been large at the end of the Thirteenth Century, but they were enormously over-estimated. Knighton, the Canon of S. Mary's, Leicester, wrote that every other man one met in the street was a Lollard. But he was writing in Leicestershire, the greatest Lollard stronghold. In actual fact, they seem only to have had any strength in certain districts between the Thames and the Trent, especially London, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and the borders of the counties of Hereford, Gloucester, and Worcester. Later we hear of Lollard committees in Bristol and the County of Kent. They were not seriously molested during the reign of Richard II., partly owing to the fact that John of Gaunt, despite his hatred of heresy was still willing to use them for his own purposes, and partly owing to the fact that the king himself was a highly educated man with liberal ideas.

He was probably not altogether out of sympathy with the more moderate Lollards. This probability is strengthened by the fact that the Lords Appellant, during their period of power, strove to oppress Lollardy ; and by the fact that one of the chief planks in the Lancastrian platform was orthodox Catholicism and the extirpation of heresy. It is also of significance in this connection that the rumours that Richard II. was alive, and the movements in his favour, during the early years of Henry IV., seem to have had a Lollard origin. In 1382 an Act was passed for the suppression of vagrant preachers, *i.e.* the poor priests ; but it seems to have been repealed the same year. In 1395 the Lollards were confident enough to present to Parliament a bill of twelve articles setting forth their conclusions in favour of reform, both in organisation and doctrine. This bill is the best account we have of the chief things that Lollardy at this time stood for. Its twelve conclusions were as follows :—

" I. When the Church of England began to dote in temporalte after her stepmother the great Church of Rome, and churches were slain by the appropriation to divers places, faith, hope and charity began for to flee out of our Church. For pride with his sorry genealogy of deadly sins challengeth it by title of heritage. The conclusion is general and proved by experienced custom and manner as thou shalt herein after.

" II. Denounces the ' usual ' priesthood derived from Rome and said to be more exhalted than the angels, as being quite a different priesthood from that which Christ ordained for His apostles, as is shown by the many rites and ceremonies they use not contained in Scripture.

"III. Priests vows of chastity tend to gross vice and private religious orders ought to be abolished.

"IV. The feigned miracle of the sacrament led all men except a few into idolatry, for they thought that the body of Christ, which was never out of Heaven, could be enclosed by the words of a priest in a small piece of bread. Whereas the Trialogus of Wycliffe showed that the bread of the altar is only the body of Christ in a figurative sense, and every faithful man and woman who believed in God's love could make the sacrament of that bread without any such miracle.

"V. Exorcisms and blessings pronounced on various things, such as wine, bread, water, oil, salt, wax and incense, church walls, vestments, etc., etc., were but juggling.

"VI. It was against good order in a kingdom if a king was a bishop, or a prelate a judge in temporal causes, or if a beneficed clergyman held a worldly office.

"VII. Special prayers for the dead, for one person by name more than any other, were a false ground of almsgiving and all almshouses (*i.e.* all religious houses) in England were founded in iniquity.

"VIII. Pilgrimages made to blind crosses called roods and deaf images of wood and stone are not far removed from idolatry.

"IX. Auricular confession, which was said to be so necessary to salvation with the feigned power of absolution, exalted the pride of the priests, and gave them opportunity of 'privy calling' (secret vice is evidently insinuated) other than the petitioners were willing to say; for lords and ladies affirmed that for fear of their confessors they durst not say the truth. Moreover, the confessional tended to abuses and to mortal sin. The

clergy professed to have the keys of Heaven and Hell, and would sell the blessing of Heaven for a bushel of wheat or twelve pence a year by Charter, with a clause of warranty under their common seal. And the Pope of Rome called himself high treasurer of the whole Church, having custody of that worthy jewel, the Passion of Christ, with the merits of all the saints in Heaven, whereby he gave feigned indulgence 'a poena et a culpa': if so, he could liberate at will, all the prisoners in Hell.

"X. Manslaughter by battle or pretended law of justice for any temporal cause without a special revelation was expressly contrary to the New Testament, which is the law of grace and full of mercy.

"XI. Vows of chastity by women who are by nature frail and imperfect lead to many horrible sins.

"XII. The multitude of unnecessary crafts used in our church encourages sin in waste, curiosity and disguising, whereas, S. Paul tells us to be content with food and raiment." (Gardiner: *Lollardy and the Reformation*, vol. i. pp. 44 *sqq.*)

Some of these articles were perfectly orthodox and in accordance with the best traditions of the Church; others endangered not only the existence of the Church, but the whole existing fabric of society. But as a whole, the articles were not without their sympathisers in Parliament. For the clergy seem to have been divided into two parties. On one side was the mass of the inferior clergy and a great many scholarly priests of the university, who sympathised in the main with Wycliffite teaching, and were opposed to persecution. The other party, led by Archbishop Arundel, consisted chiefly of the upper clergy,

mostly scions of the great baronial houses, who opposed Richard II. These were narrow, bigoted and worldly, and believed in the utter extirpation of Lollardy by fire and sword. They gained the upper hand on the deposition of Richard II., and signalised their power by the burning of William Sawtre or Chatrys, a Lollard priest, at Smithfield in the spring of 1401. The custom of burning heretics was previously almost unknown in England in the Middle Ages. A deacon, who had fallen in love with a Jewess and abjured Christianity, in order to become a Jew, had been burnt at Oxford in the year 1222. But apart from this there is no certain record of any heretic having been burnt in England, though the penalty was regarded as existing as a matter of course in Common Law.

The burning of Sawtre was intended to strike terror into the hearts of the Lollards, who were thought to be a danger to the country. It was followed by the famous statute 'De Haeretico Comburendo,' which simplified the procedure of burning heretics. "A certain new sect," says the Act, "damnably thinking of the sacraments and usurping the office of preaching, went about under colour of dissembled holiness, propagating doctrines against the faith." The bishops accordingly were given power to arrest and imprison offenders till they purged themselves. If a man refused to abjure his heresy or relapsed after abjuration, he was left to the secular arm. The sheriff of the county or the municipal authorities of the place should be present to receive the culprit, and, after promulgation of the sentence, have him burned in an high place before the people.

The statutes had the desired effect. Few Lollards had the courage of Sawtre's, and many hastened to

abjure their heresy at S. Paul's Cross. Consequently, the burnings for heresy were extremely few. The next did not take place till 1410, when John Badby, a tailor of Evesham, was burnt in the presence of the Prince of Wales, who vainly strove to induce him to recant.

As the century advanced the Lollards became less a religious body and more a body of rebels against the social order, and the vast majority of those who were burnt suffered much more for political than religious reasons, in an age that failed to draw nice distinctions between religion and politics. With the accession of Henry V., a more determined policy was adopted against them. An act of 1414 strengthened the statute of 1401, by arming the secular officers of justice with authority to coordinate with the spiritual power. Sir John Oldcastle, the most illustrious Lollard of the day, was arrested, tried and condemned; but escaped from the Tower (Oct. 19, 1413) with the help of certain London citizens. His escape was followed by the great insurrection of S. Giles Fields, where it was rumoured that 100,000 Lollards were going to meet in order to overthrow the kingdom. Their numbers were vastly exaggerated, their plans were discovered, and they were arrested in large numbers whilst making for their rendezvous (Jan. 10, 1414). The whole rising came to nothing. Many executions followed, till a free pardon on March 28 brought vengeance to a close. Oldcastle himself was captured in a farm-house at Broniarth, on the Welsh March, in 1417, and hanged in S. Giles Fields.

Lollardy remained fairly strong till about 1432, and then very rapidly declined. It soon became so weak that the Church began to despise it. The reason for its decline is, partly, its gradual abandonment of religion

for politics and, partly, a gradual recovery of the Church from the corruptions consequent upon the Black Death. Also, the poverty, misery and brutality of the Wars of the Roses caused so much preoccupation with the material necessities of life that the need of reform in the Church excited little notice.

(*d*) The last result of the Hundred Years War, to which we must now turn, is the domestic discontent caused by the losses and mismanagement of the war during the dotage of Edward III. and the reign of Richard II. The Peace of Brètigny (1360) was only a truce. Charles V., who soon afterwards succeeded John, the prisoner of Poitiers, was an astute statesman armed with all the wiles of a subtle lawyer. He strengthened himself in every possible way, and waited for a favourable opportunity of attacking the Black Prince, who now ruled at Bordeaux over the Duchy of Aquitaine. His Spanish expedition in favour of Pedro the Cruel, of Castille (1367), left him with a fever which was slowly dragging him to the grave, and which intensified his naturally overbearing temper. When he sought to raise revenue by the levy of a hearth tax, the barons of Aquitaine banded together to refuse to pay, and appealed to Charles V. of France (May 1368). Charles, though by the Treaty of Brètigny the King of France was supposed to have yielded up his feudal suzerainty over Aquitaine, now summoned the Black Prince to Paris to answer the charges of the barons of his duchy (1369). The Prince gave the blustering reply that he would appear at the head of 60,000 men. But now everything was against him. His own failing health marred his energy and judgment. England was over-taxed and sent little help. Moreover, France had in Du Guesclin a captain of first-

rate ability. The circumstances of the war were changed. France had been so ravaged by the Jacquerie and by the 'Free Companies,' that the English plundering raids brought little profit. And mere plundering raids were a most inefficient way of defending territory. Finally, the defensive strength of France under Charles V. was immense, owing to the high state of development of defensive fortifications that we have already had occasion to notice. The result was that the English constantly lost ground in France. The narrow seas soon became unsafe for English merchants ; and the very seaports of the prosperous south coast were constantly liable to pillage. Rye and Hastings were burnt and the Isle of Wight overrun, in one year—1377. The contrast between the brilliant victories of Sluys, Creçy and Poitiers in the middle of the century and the failure and loss at the end was a dismal and a bitter one.

Nearly all great outbursts of popular discontent and revolution are the result of failure in war. The discontent in England was, no doubt, due to many contributory causes—particularly the social conditions arising out of the Black Death, which we have already considered. But it was the failure of the war that focussed discontent on to the Government, which, in the illness of the Black Prince and the dotage of the king, fell largely into the hands of the worthless and incompetent John of Gaunt, the 'best-hated' man in England. John of Gaunt was opposed by the mass of the people and also by those of the clergy who resented his anti-clerical measures. On the popular side, too, was the Black Prince, who, however, was able to do little to oppose his brother, owing to the growing seriousness of his illness, which often threw him into a coma resembling

death. He bestirred himself a little in 1376, when the so-called 'Good Parliament' met under his aegis to protest against the abuses of the Government, the greed and peculation of John of Gaunt and his friends, and the undue influence of Alice Perrers over the old king. The Commons, led by Peter de la Mare, showed much vigour and determination to put down abuses and mismanagement. But their reforms were short lived. The Black Prince succumbed to his disease on June 8, and John of Gaunt brought back all the old grievances and violently put down his adversaries. The accession of the young Richard II., next year, brought no change; and affairs worked rapidly towards the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

Many causes combined to produce this outbreak. In some parts of the country the high cost of labour, resulting from the Black Death, caused landlords to exact the uttermost farthing of their villeins' services, which had been long commuted for a money payment. Thus, the villein, who had formerly been little worse off than his free neighbour, now saw the free man able to sell his services at exorbitant prices in the best market he could find, while he was tied to the soil and could not benefit by the scarcity of labour. The free, on the other hand, chafed under the tyrannous restrictions which the Statues of Labourers sought to impose, and were emboldened by prosperity into a desire for revolution. In other parts the rapid growth of sheep farming had thrown large tracts of land out of cultivation, and created a body of unemployed who were ripe for a disturbance. In many towns, too, there was discontent. The craft gilds had become narrow oligarchies, who, by raising their fees and making their members buy a costly livery, made it impossible for large numbers of good craftsmen

to join them. These men, after duly serving their apprenticeship, found themselves too poor ever to become anything more than journeymen, who worked for a member of the craft gild for a daily wage, and who were debarred from all the privileges of the gild. Thus, town society becomes divided into two sharply defined bodies, representing, respectively, Capital and Labour—the latter ripe for revolution. Added to all this was the fact that the country was full of old soldiers whose incapacity or unwillingness for peaceable employment made them very ready for an armed insurrection. Thus, the half-mythical Wat Tyler, who led the Kentishmen, appears to have been an old soldier. Wycliffe's doctrines in an exaggerated form had spread among all these discontented elements in the population. John Ball is probably typical of many another preacher, who stirred up the people with his crude doctrines of the natural equality of men, and the wickedness of private property. Finally, the bad finance of the Government led to the imposition of the oppressive poll-taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1380.

The result of all these causes was a great rising of the common people of Southern and Eastern England, extending from Yorkshire to Devonshire, during June 1381. The study of local history is constantly resulting in the discovery of traces of the disturbance much further afield than was previously suspected. The movements in various parts were not simultaneous; but they synchronised sufficiently to make it probable that they were concerted, and not mere coincidences. The Government was paralysed for a time by the unexpected nature of the danger. The rebels gained possession of London and of practically everything else. But the

courage of the boy king, and the grant of the abolition of villeinage weathered the storm for a moment, and the forces of law and order reasserted themselves and crushed out the rebellion.

The immediate result of the rebellion was to make things harder for the lower orders. Parliament now, as always in the Middle Ages, an anti-popular assembly, repudiated Richard II.'s abolition of villeinage. A reaction against the villein set in. But the revolt was not fruitless. It gave increased currency to the aspirations of men for personal liberty, and for some sort of equality of opportunity. It also gave pause to the oppressive landlord when he was tempted to exact his pound of flesh too rigorously. Gradually, under the stress of economic facts and the difficulty of exacting services of much real value from an unwilling villeinage, services were commuted ; and by the end of the Fifteenth Century villeinage had almost disappeared.

Despite its sundry and manifold causes, the Great Revolt may be viewed as one of the manifestations of discontent at the bad management of the war. Another manifestation was the strong opposition to Richard II., which led ultimately to his deposition and the accession of the House of Lancaster. Lancastrianism had its root, no doubt, in the jealousy of great nobles for the Crown that had led to similar troubles in the reigns of Henry III. and Edward II. But it could never have achieved its object, as it did, had it not been backed by a body of public opinion that was disgusted with our failure in France.

Richard II.'s career can best be understood on the hypothesis that he was a good man, that he really loved the common people and sought to improve their

condition ; that he and his queen, Anne of Bohemia, were not untouched by Wycliffe's doctrines and were reluctant to crush the extravagances of Lollardy ; that he was a man of wide culture and liberal ideas ; and that he was largely in advance of his time in seeking to build up a strong and efficient monarchy, ruling through a council of experts—a monarchy of the kind that prevailed in the greater part of the civilised world a century or more afterwards. This hypothesis cannot be proved, for want of material. But it squares best with known facts, and explains the hostility of the selfish and reactionary baronage.

These gained their purpose by the capture of Richard II. and the placing on the throne of Henry, son of John of Gaunt, who was not the next of kin to Richard, and who, therefore, ruled not by virtue of birth, despite the legends of his supporters, but by the will of Parliament, that is, the will of the great barons. Thus, the House of Lancaster held its position by a kind of implicit contract that they should govern efficiently, bring the country glory in the war, and give the barons a great share in the government.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LATTER PART OF THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE MEDIEVAL STATE (1400-1500)

§ 1. The Renewal of the War under the House of Lancaster.

§ 2. Reasons for the success up to the year 1430.
- (*a*) Factions in France.
- (*b*) English tactics and the development of plate armour.
- (*c*) The campaign of Agincourt with its wonderful success.
- (*d*) The murder of the Duke of Burgundy.

§ 3. Reasons for the failure after 1430.
- (*a*) Joan of Arc.
- (*b*) The defection of Burgundy.
- (*c*) Improved French tactics and the use of gunpowder.
- (*d*) Disorder at home.

§ 4. Results of the failure in France.
- (*a*) Poverty, discontent, collapse of law and order—liveries and maintenance.
- (*b*) The curse of war comes home to roost in the Wars of the Roses.

§ 5. The Emergence of a New State and a New Age with many new features.
- (*a*) Strong monarchy.
- (*b*) A strong and wealthy middle class.
- (*c*) The use of paper.
- (*d*) The invention of printing.
- (*e*) Greek learning.

§ 6. Conclusion.

§ 1. With the renewal of the Hundred Years War, [1369] under the House of Lancaster, medieval civilisation in England, already severely wounded by the Black Death

and the earlier period of war, struggles hopelessly for its life, till the Wars of the Roses give it the 'coup de grace' and put an end to it for ever. When civilisation gradually appears again under the House of York and the House of Tudor it is a different civilisation, akin more to that of classical Greece and Rome than to that of the Middle Ages. The very existence of medieval civilisation is almost forgotten, and everything medieval is regarded as a barbarian survival of a supposed age of unmitigated darkness between decay of Ancient Rome and the birth of Modern Europe.

During the earlier part of his reign, Henry IV. was too preoccupied with other affairs to push on a war with France. He was a usurper and the head of a baronial faction. He had, therefore, to reward his followers with lands from the royal demesne and pensions from the exchequer. This brought the Crown to such a state of poverty that it could not reduce Wales, under Owen Glendower, nor Scotland to order. It could not even reduce the discontented over-mighty barons, like the Percies, to order without a severe struggle. Moreover, the fact that Henry was a usurper committed him to the so-called 'Lancastrian experiment,' the experiment of sharing the government with Parliament; and, however excellent parliamentary government may be in other ways, it is bound to be less efficient than government by a well served despotic monarchy. Towards the end of his reign Henry managed to overcome most of his difficulties. Owen Glendower suffered several severe defeats and, though he was never conquered, he ceased to give much trouble. The unchivalrous capture of the young King James I., when sailing to France (1406), kept Scotland in check, and the final defeat and death of the

crafty old Earl of Northumberland reduced England to a condition of comparative peace.

But as soon as Henry got leisure for French affairs his health, weak like that of most of John of Gaunt's descendants, broke down, and it was only on the accession of his eldest son, Henry V. (1413), that the war was renewed with vigour and success.

Henry set matters in motion by sending an embassy to the King of France, in August 1414, with the strange request that Charles VI. should restore to him the kingdom of France. This was a claim so absurd that it is wonderful that Henry V. succeeded in persuading himself, as he really appears to have done, that his claim was a good one. Granting even that Edward III.'s claim to inherit through the female line was a sound one, his claim would have passed, by right of primogeniture, to the Earl of March, grandson of Edward's second son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, and not to Henry V., who was only the grandson of Edward's third son, John of Gaunt. If the English Parliament had chosen the House of Lancaster in preference to the descendants of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, to reign over them, this choice could hardly be regarded as binding the kingdom of France. However, this curious embassy was courteously received and loaded with honours and presents, but it left without getting any reply. Henry repeated his demand, and Charles VI. promised to send a great embassy to England—so terrified was France at the prospect of an English invasion in the midst of her civil disturbances. Henry's letters to the French king at this time are full of religious appeals, which, did we not know Henry better, we should put down to the rankest hypocrisy. He refers constantly to the Bible; calls upon God to witness that

he is not pursuing any personal interest ; that he hates the effusion of blood ; and that if there is war it will be no fault of his.

He received the French embassy in great state in the Episcopal palace at Winchester. The Archbishop of Bourges, on behalf of France, offered the hand of Katherine, daughter of Charles VI., and a dowry of 850,000 crowns of gold, together with fifteen towns and a considerable portion of Aquitaine. The proposal seemed at first to be well received. But when it came to discussing details, Henry's demands enlarged ; and he required such impossible guarantees that negotiations broke down. Then the Archbishop of Bourges, who had full power to make peace or war, changed his tone. He declared defiantly that not only was Henry's claim to the French throne groundless, but that he was only really Duke of Lancaster, and not rightly King even of England. Thereupon Henry angrily told the embassy to be gone, adding the ominous promise that he would soon follow them.

§ 2. (*a*) Henry V.'s success surpassed that of even Edward III. in his palmiest days. The reasons for this revival of the glory of English arms are not far to seek. The first is the disorganisation of France [1] and its civil war. France, like England at this time, was suffering from the over-mighty noble of royal or semi-royal blood, 'the princes of the fleur-de-lys.' Like England, too, it was suffering from democratic agitation. The intermittent madness of the French king, and the incompetence of his government, caused the whole kingdom to

[1] For further information, see Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vol. iv. ; and Funck Brentano : *The Middle Ages*, vol. i. of the National History of France series (translated) (Heinemann & Co.).

be divided into two great baronial factions: the one led by the Duke of Burgundy, and the other by the Duke of Orleans—often called the Armagnac, from the younger Orlean's energetic father-in-law, the Count of Armagnac. The Duke of Burgundy was a man of vast possessions, especially in Eastern France, where he held the Duchy of Burgundy, the counties of Charolais, Nevers, Rethel, Artois and Flanders; and over the frontier, where he figured as an important, independent prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and where he ruled also over the County of Burgundy and some wealthy provinces of the industrial Low Countries. In revenue and extent of territory he surpassed many of the greatest kings in Europe. He had great influence, geographically, over Eastern and Northern France; and, socially, over the middle and trading classes. The large, wealthy and turbulent population of Paris was enthusiastically Burgundian. The Armagnacs, on the contrary, had their strength chiefly in Central and Southern France, and were supported by the great majority of the nobles. They were the more national faction, standing, as far as they stood for anything, for France for the French.

In the year 1407 an event happened which plunged the two factions into irreconcilable war. On the evening of November 23, Louis, Duke of Orleans, had left the house of his mother, the queen, and was on his way to visit the king, when he was assailed by an armed band and left for dead on the street. This murder, towards which the people of Paris remained cynical and apathetic, greatly distressed the court; and Orleans was given a magnificent funeral, at which John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, was present, and gave every sign of grief for

his cousin. But the story goes that when he heard that a search was to be made in all the princes' houses he was greatly disturbed, and said to his uncle, the Duke of Berry, "It is I who did it all; the devil tempted me," and fled as fast as he could gallop to Flanders. Whether this is altogether true or not, there is no doubt that the murder was done at the instigation of the Duke of Burgundy.

Duke John returned to Paris next year, and the Dominican friar, Jean Petit, defended the duke's murder of Orleans on the ground that it was tyrannicide. The young Duke of Orleans, son of the murdered man, and his father-in-law, Bernard of Armagnac, now prepared for war; which continued with many hollow, patched-up reconciliations, till 1415. At first the mad King Charles VI., as well as Paris, was in the hands of Burgundy. But John the Fearless stirred up the mob of Paris in 1413 to a great outburst, not unlike the early days of the French Revolution. The rioters, led by a flayer, named Caboche, from whom they derived their name of 'Cabochiens,' got completely out of the duke's control, and committed fearful atrocities. At last, the forces of order in Paris rallied against their extravagances, and put them down. A great reaction set in in favour of the Armagnacs; and Burgundy had to leave the city on August 22. Thus, the Armagnacs managed to get possession of Paris and of the king. Burgundy was declared a rebel and an enemy of the kingdom. At last peace was patched up between the two parties at Arras (Feb. 25, 1415). Burgundy, meanwhile, had sought to make good his loss of prestige by entering into a secret treaty with Henry V. Negotiations began as early as January 1414, and, by the preliminary con-

vention of Leicester on May 23, an offensive and defensive alliance between John the Fearless and Henry V. was arranged. According to its terms John was to help Henry to conquer the demesnes of princes belonging to the Armagnac party. He would receive his part of the conquest out of the royal demesne, while observing neutrality towards the King and the Dauphin. Finally, at a later date he would do homage to the King of England. This preliminary convention was confirmed and enlarged at Ypres on Aug. 7. But Burgundy was playing a double game. He denied all connection with England ; and at the Peace of Arras (Feb. 25, 1415) he gave an assurance that he was not bound by any agreement with the enemies of the kingdom. He was waiting to see which way the cat would jump. However, Henry V. found France sufficiently divided to make his invasion a practicable enterprise.

(*b*) The other great reason for Henry's success in France was the fact that the English superiority in military tactics still remained to them from the days of Creçy and Poitiers. He was still virtually certain of a victory in the field against almost unlimited odds should the French venture to risk an attack upon him in the field. For during the period of nearly seventy years since Creçy, there had been remarkably few changes in the art of war. The French still relied on their heavily-armed feudal cavalry, which since Creçy had merely learned to dismount and march to the attack on foot. The English still had the long-bow, which neither the cross-bow nor the use of primitive firearms had been able to render obsolete. The one and only great change during the past seventy years had been in the vastly increased weight of plate armour which the knight now

wore. This development of plate armour is of great importance, as accounting largely for the victory at Agincourt, and for the great mortality of nobles during the Wars of the Roses. From early Norman days till the beginning of the Fourteenth Century the knight had been content with a solid steel helmet, usually flat at the top to protect his head, and a shirt of mail to protect his body. His legs also would be encased in mail. He was thus quite lightly armed and would ward off heavy blows with his large and substantial shield. During the course of the Fourteenth Century, the knight's coat of mail gradually came to be covered with plates of solid steel over the most vulnerable parts of his body. Thus, for instance, a breastplate was placed over the mail as a second protection for the greater part of the body. Ailettes or roundels protected the shoulders from downward cuts, arm pieces and leg pieces protected the limbs. Before the middle of the century cunningly-devised sliding pieces protected the knees and elbows without interfering with their freedom of movement. The helmet, or bassinet, as it was called, became peaked and much larger than its predecessor, and the neck of the wearer was protected by a cammail, a falling piece of mail fastened to the helmet at the top and to the shoulders at the bottom. By the time of Agincourt even the cammail had been superseded by the gorget, made of plates of steel; and the mail shirt that used to fall below the breastplate was superseded by solid plates and 'torlets' or overlapping bands of steel to cover the thighs. Even the feet of the wearer were covered with steel bands carefully constructed so as not to prevent free movement. Thus, hardly any mail remained visible on the armoured knight. Underneath all this immensely

heavy system of steel plates was usually a coat of mail, and underneath the mail was usually a quilted 'haketon,' to protect the knight's body against being chafed by his steel encasement. The knight was now so strongly protected that the shield was hardly necessary. It became very small and finally fell into disuse, except for heraldic purposes. The result of all this protective armour was that the knight was fairly safe from the dreaded long-bow, which was probably responsible for the increase of the weight of armour; but he had lost all power of rapid movement. He could only walk with difficulty. To mount a horse without assistance became a wonderful feat of strength. If he fell from his horse or were knocked down in a melée, he would probably be stunned and suffocated. In any case, it would be extremely difficult for him to rise unassisted. Finally, the heat of summer was a terrible enemy to the knight in his triple defensive harness. These disadvantages will find many illustrations as we proceed to examine the campaigns of the latter part of the Hundred Years War and the Wars of the Roses. Henry V. was well aware that his lightly-armed soldiers on foot, with the help of the long-bow, would easily break the assaults of the heavily-armed feudal knights and nobles of France.

(*c*) Most great generals have, like Napoleon, been great believers in luck, and the last reason for the success of English arms is the element of luck which attended the Agincourt expedition, together with supreme military genius of Henry V. This will appear from a short study of this momentous campaign. Unlike most medieval kings, Henry paid an infinite attention to detail. Long before he set out from Southampton on the great venture (Aug. 13, 1415), he had gathered vast magazines of food

and machinery of war at Southampton and Calais. Having landed at the Chef de Caux, on the northern side of the estuary of the Seine, he carefully laid siege to Harfleur, regarding it as a second Calais, which was to be the key of Normandy. The French Government, without army or money, was not in a position to hasten to its relief; and so it surrendered on September 22. The keys were delivered up, a careful inventory of the property of the town was drawn up, and the property of the Church and of women was exempted from pillage. Henry V. went devoutly barefoot to the church of S. Martin, and offered thanks for his good fortune. He did everything to conciliate the people of Normandy. He had already issued a proclamation to the effect that he had come into his own territory and kingdom to restore the inhabitants to the rights and liberties that they had held under S. Louis. Like Napoleon, he was always striving to appeal to popular opinion by brilliant proclamations. After resting twenty days in Harfleur, he determined to march, in spite of the lateness of the season, to Calais in imitation of Edward III.'s Creçy campaign. On October 8 he set out in a North-Easterly direction, following more or less the coast-line, and intending to cross the Somme at Blanchetache, like his great-grandfather in 1346. But he learnt from a Gascon squire, who had been taken prisoner, that this ford was strongly held by French forces. He directed his march, accordingly, up the left bank of the Somme to the neighbourhood of Nesle, where he discovered an unguarded crossing. He now found himself in the neighbourhood of a large French army. After marching day after day in incessant rain the two armies found themselves face to face, near Agincourt, on the evening of October 24.

Henry had probably about 6000 men, five-sixths of whom were lightly-armed archers. The French army may have amounted to as many as 30,000, nearly all of whom were heavily-armed men-at-arms in the heavy plate armour that has already been described.

The two armies passed the night so near that the cries of the French, who spent the night in carousal, could be plainly heard in the English camp. Next morning, the Feast of SS. Crispin and Crispian, both armies prepared for battle. Henry's army was carefully drawn up about four deep across the Calais road, with their backs to the village of Maisoncelles and their flanks strongly protected by large woods, so that the enemy could not outflank them. They were in the usual three 'battles,' with the archers somewhat in advance on the wings. In front was a ploughed field, sodden by the incessant rain of many days. The position was strengthened by a palisade of sharpened stakes, to prevent the archers being ridden down by cavalry. Most of Henry's troops were stripped to the waist, and many of them barefoot, so that their movements might be as free as possible.

On the other side of the ploughed field lay the great French army of heavily-armed feudal cavalry. It was in the usual three 'battles,' which were drawn up one behind another in ranks forty or fifty deep, this formation being rendered necessary by the narrowness of the front offered by the English between the two woods. At about 11 o'clock the battle began. All the French men-at-arms dismounted (except two squadrons which were intended to operate on the flanks), and began to march a mile across the ploughed field to the attack. Weighed down by their steel plate-armour, they sank knee deep in the rain-sodden, newly-ploughed land;

blinded by the sun, which shone in their faces, they were mown down by the hail of clothyard shafts from the English lines. Long before the survivors came within arm's length of Henry's troops, they were tired out and fainting under the weight of their armour. Then, when his arrows were all spent, Henry gave the decisive order to charge, and his own lightly-armed, half-naked men prevailed over the heavily-armed chivalry of France at odds of five to one. The embogged knights stood helplessly to be hewn down. The archers "beat upon their armour with mallets as though they were hammering upon anvils." At length the dead lay three deep, many of them having perished more from fatigue and suffocation than from wounds.

At the end of this astonishing victory the French were found to have lost 10,000 men, and every man of note in the French army who was not killed was taken prisoner. The English lost about 100, among them one, the Duke of York, who died, like so many French nobles, from fatigue and the weight of his armour.

The victory of Agincourt had many results. It was greeted with a frenzy of joy in England, so that the House of Lancaster was at last firmly seated on the throne. It laid open France to conquest. It is often said that Henry's march from Harfleur to Calais was the act of a reckless knight-errant, that only missed disaster by a wonderful stroke of luck. Had the French refused to attack him in his carefully-chosen position and simply barred his way to Calais, they could certainly, it is said, have destroyed him. This argument is not convincing. While freely granting that Henry did enjoy a remarkable measure of good fortune in this campaign, it may be replied that Henry's whole career is utterly alien to that

of the medieval knight-errant. In all his later campaigns he showed the coldly calculating spirit of a man who leaves nothing to chance, and an almost Teutonic 'thoroughness' in all his undertakings. Moreover, a feudal host like the French army, with its turbulent, undisciplined nobles, could not be sufficiently controlled by the higher command to pursue Fabian tactics. When they saw the English drawn up for battle, nothing could restrain them from a pell-mell attack. Henry seems to have counted on this fact, and he knew well enough that, if attacked in his own position, he would have a better chance of victory than even that of his great-grandfather at Creçy, owing to the increased weight of his enemies' armour.

(*a*) Despite the early death of Henry V. (August 31, 1422), the English steadily advanced towards getting the whole of France under their control. By the Treaty of Troyes (May 20 and 21, 1420), the Dauphin had been disinherited and Henry recognised as regent and heir of the mad King Charles. He also married Katherine, the king's daughter, who bore him a son, afterwards Henry VI., before his death. So that there seemed every prospect of his founding a permanent dynasty for France as well as for England. Before this, too, an event occurred which placed the vast power of Burgundy whole-heartedly on the English side. John the Fearless, after Agincourt, with his habitual opportunism, carried out simultaneous negotiations with the English and with the Armagnacs, who now followed the Dauphin in his attempt to drive the English out of France. In July 1419 he was reconciled with the Dauphin by the good offices of Lady de Giac, a mutual friend. They met near Pouilli, exchanged the kiss of peace, and swore to be true

to one another by the true cross, the Holy Gospels and their share in Paradise, while the nobles, who accompanied them, cried "Noël! Noël!" They promised to work together faithfully for the expulsion of the English from France. But John the Fearless continued, none the less, to negotiate with the English. Their conquests continued, and Burgundy did nothing to stop them. The Dauphin, therefore, sought another interview with him in order to clear matters up. John was unwilling to see him, but at last sent a message to say that he would be at the Bridge of Montereau on September 10. There, in the middle of the bridge, the two princes met, each with ten or twelve followers. High words arose. The Dauphin accused John of having broken his word. The duke defended himself, and the followers of the princes broke up the discussion by their menacing attitude. The Dauphin was led away by one of his followers; and a few minutes afterwards the Duke of Burgundy lay on the bridge with a mortal wound on his head. The exact details of his murder are unknown, but its result was to throw John's son, Philip the Good, entirely into the hands of England. His duty of avenging his father outweighed all claims of patriotism. Thus, Henry gained over about one-third of France as his enthusiastic ally. A hundred years later Francis I. was shown the skull of John the Fearless by a Carthusian monk at Dijon. He remarked, as he pointed out a great hole in the top of the skull, "This, Sire, is the hole through which the English entered France."

Another immense advantage on the English side was the fine leadership of the Duke of Bedford, who took command in France after the death of Henry V., a fine tactician, a bold and brilliant leader, a just and capable

administrator, and one ready to spend and be spent to the uttermost in the service of his country. Such was John, Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V., who acted as regent in France for the six-months-old Henry VI.

Added to all these advantages was the fact that the French still attacked in the old way that had so often brought them defeat. For fourteen years after Agincourt, therefore, the story of the war is one of almost uninterrupted [1] English progress. The Dauphin's followers were weakened by inefficient government and constant dissensions, and his soldiers were demoralised by the constant succession of defeats they had sustained from the English. By the year 1428 the English and the Burgundians held all Eastern France, almost all Northern France to the Loire, and the big province of Gascony in the south. The Dauphin's power centred round Poitiers and Bourges. He had one strong fortress on the Loire—Orleans, which was the key to his whole position. It was one of the most strongly fortified positions in the kingdom, and the Dauphin had spent about three-quarters of his attenuated revenue for the past twelve years in fortifying it. If the Anglo-Burgundians took this they would succeed almost certainly in bringing every acre of French territory under their sway. This they determined to do; and in the autumn of 1428, the Earl of Salisbury, at the head of a small, but efficient, force of some 8000 men, proceeded to blockade the city.

§ 3. The siege of Orleans was the turning point of the war. The fortunes of the Dauphin (who had assumed the title of Charles VII. on the death of his father on

[1] The Duke of Clarence's defeat and death at Baugé (Mar. 21, 1421) was an exception devoid of all real significance.

October 21, 1422) were at their lowest ebb. Some of his advisers suggested giving up the northern part of his small territory and retiring to Dauphiné. He even contemplated leaving France altogether and taking refuge in Scotland or Castille. Then Joan of Arc appears and relieves Orleans, and wins a series of wonderful victories in 1429 and 1430. From that time onwards the war goes steadily against the English. Step by step, doggedly contesting every inch of ground, they are driven out of the North of France. Then they lose the province of Gascony in the South, and by the year 1453 only Calais and the Channel Islands remain of our once vast Continental possessions.

The reasons for our failure were manifold.

(*a*) The first is the potent influence of Joan of Arc in restoring the confidence of the French troops and playing upon the superstitious terrors of the English. The wonderful story of this peasant girl of Domrèmy, on the borders of Champagne and Lorraine, does not directly concern us. The important fact about her is that the soldiers whom the Dauphin put in her charge believed that she was the constant recipient of messages from the Archangel Michael and many of the saints, and that 'the King of Heaven' had entrusted her with the work of relieving Orleans, getting the Dauphin crowned at Rheims, and driving the English out of France. Thus men, demoralised by generations of incessant defeats at the hands of the English, were fired again with confidence and enthusiasm. The English, on the other hand, were firmly convinced that she was, in the words of the Duke of Bedford, "a disciple and limb of the fiend that used false enchantments and sorcery." Her victories were not due to any remarkable strategy on her part. She simply led

her forces straight ahead to the attack. She won so often simply because of the confidence she inspired among her followers and the terror she struck into her foes. She was not invariably successful. But her relief of Orleans, in April and May 1429, saved the Dauphin from destruction ; and her victory at Patay, in which for the first time for many generations the French beat the English in a fair-pitched battle, shattered the halo of invincibility that had hitherto surrounded English arms. Long before her capture by the Burgundians, at Compiègne (May 23, 1430), her work was done. The morale of French arms was restored. The English might wreak their fearful vengeance on the hapless Pucelle at Rouen (Dec. 28, 1430-May 20, 1431), but they could not undo her work.

(*b*) While the French were regaining confidence, the English were weakened by the lukewarmness and gradual defection of the Burgundians. As time went on, and the Dauphin was humbled in the dust, Philip the Good began to feel that his father was sufficiently avenged. This feeling was increased by the thoughtless conduct of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the brilliant and learned, but unstable, brother of Bedford's, who acted as Regent of England during Bedford's absence in France. Jacqueline, the heiress of Holland and Hainault, fled from her husband, John, Duke of Brabant, and sought Gloucester's protection (1424). Gloucester, with the aid of papal dispensations, married her and claimed her inheritance. Now, Jacqueline and John of Brabant were both cousins of Burgundy, and Burgundy was heir presumptive to the territories of both. Moreover, Holland and Hainault were of vital importance to him, geographically, for the rounding off of his territories.

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When, therefore, Gloucester raised an army and persisted in invading Hainault, the Duke of Burgundy was furious. Feeling grew so fierce that a duel was arranged. It was only through the superhuman efforts of Bedford that the duel was cancelled, and matters were smoothed over for a time. Bedford managed to keep Philip on his side, chiefly because he had married his sister, Anne of Burgundy. When, however, Anne, "the fair and good lady beloved of the people of Paris," died in 1432, Bedford offended him seriously by marrying again after barely four months—and that a Burgundian vassal, Jacquette of Luxemburg. This was virtually the end of the Burgundian alliance, without which the English possessions were untenable, owing to the exposure of their Eastern flank. The death of Bedford (Sept. 1435), the one really great man that England possessed, finally decided Burgundy to sign the Treaty of Arras (Sept. 21, 1435), by which he made peace with the Dauphin.

(*c*) The English position was now hopeless, and their discomfiture was increased by a great improvement in French leadership and tactics. Just as the earlier half of the Hundred Years War gradually brought to the front great captains like Du Guesclin, so its last phases produced French leaders like Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans, the Constable de Richemont, Barbasan and La Hire, who were expert in every detail of the art of war. They gradually discovered the secret of English successes in the field, and refused to attack armies drawn up on their own ground. At Patay, Joan of Arc's victory, Talbot was attacked by the French vanguard before he could get his forces into array in a suitable position, so that the superiority of French numbers was bound to

tell. In other battles the French successfully opposed gunpowder to the long-bow. Thus, at Formigny (1450), the English were drawn up as at Creçy or Agincourt. But the French refused to charge them. They simply brought up their cannon and proceeded to play on the English ranks from a distance out of bow-shot, till at last the English broke their ranks and charged the cannon—thus enabling the French to use their superior forces and their cavalry to advantage. At Castillon (1453) the French took a strong position and waited for Talbot to attack. When he did so his columns were blown to pieces by the French artillery. The English only hung on to their French territory as long as they did owing to their possession of so many fortified places. But even here they were at a disadvantage for the improvement in artillery enabled the French to retake fortresses in a much shorter time than the English had originally required to take them. Jean Bureau, Charles VII.'s master gunner, showed for the first time what a decisive factor in siege warfare gunpowder was likely to become. Moreover, the English had so many men on garrison duty throughout France, that the forces they were able to put in the field were absurdly small.

(*d*) To carry on a successful war abroad a country must be well-organised and well-governed at home. England, during the last phase of the Hundred Years War, fell lamentably short of these requirements. The poverty and mismanagement of the government was so great, and the country so lawless, that supplies of men and money could not be kept up. Parliament clamoured for the continuance of the war and refused to hear of peace. But it also refused to face the bill. It was difficult to get a few hundred men to fight the French at a

time when tens of thousands of armed men were engaged in faction fights in England.

§ 4. (*a*) The latter part of the Hundred Years War gave a greatly increased force to many destructive tendencies already in existence. Most of all, it greatly increased lawlessness and discontent with the government. Ever since the Black Death, and the earlier part of the Hundred Years War, there had been an increasing tendency to popular unrest, such as showed itself in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and in baronial turbulence. Richard II. had tried to control it by setting up a strong monarchy. His deposition and the accession of the House of Lancaster meant a vastly increased weakness of the central government. Henry IV. had to give away so much of his crown lands, in order to reconcile the nobles to his usurpation, that the crown became too poor to govern efficiently. For Parliament still believed that the king ought to 'live on his own.' Throughout his reign, therefore, many nobles, like the Percies or Owen Glendower, were able to defy for years the central government, and reign in their districts like independent sovereigns. Baronial power was made especially formidable by the concentration of estates in the hands of a few. Edward III. married his numerous sons to great heiresses, making the oft-repeated mistake that he would thereby raise up a nobility loyal to the crown. He only succeeded in raising up a nobility as hostile as ever to the crown; but more formidable, because wealthier and of royal blood—which put the crown itself within the sphere of their ambition. Outside the royal family, too, there was a tremendous concentration of estates in the hands of a few great families, the most obvious example being, of course, the Nevilles. At the beginning of the Four-

teenth Century they had been a comparatively unimportant Northern family. The Neville who commanded the English at Neville's Cross in 1346 possessed about seventy manors and supplied 600 men for the army in Brittany. His grandson, Ralph, was created Earl of Westmoreland by Richard II. He had twenty-three children, nearly all of whom made advantageous marriages. Among the husbands of his daughters were Richard, Duke of York, who was killed at Agincourt, the Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Buckingham, and the Earl of Northumberland. One of his sons, Richard, married the heiress of the Montague Earls of Salisbury. The result of all these successful marriages was that in the Parliaments of the early years of Henry VI. he had one grandson, three sons and five sons-in-law. Thus, there were ten who were either Nevilles or brothers-in-law of Nevilles in a House of Lords that contained fewer than fifty lay peers. Lastly, Richard Neville, Salisbury's son, married Anne Beauchamp, the heiress of the Earldom of Warwick, and himself succeeded to the earldom in 1449.

Such great baronial families as these were far too powerful to be controlled by the impoverished central government of the House of Lancaster. Henry V.'s great success in France gave him power for a time to keep order, and also enabled him to keep the barons busy across the Channel. But with his death and the failure of the war, the barons regained their power to such an extent that men of small property found that the central government was far too weak to protect them. The great series of Paston Letters, which have come down to us, show how impossible it was for a landowner of moderate fortune to keep his own property from being seized by neighbouring nobles. The only thing he could do was

to put himself under the protection of one of them. Thus, during the weak rule of Henry VI., there grew up a vast system of 'liveries and maintenance,' a recrudescence of the feudalism of Stephen's reign. All the lesser landowners would choose a great noble of the district as their patron. They would sign a properly drawn agreement, promising to support him and to lead their tenants to fight for him, and he on his part would promise to maintain them in their lands, and would give them a livery or badge inscribed with his emblem to wear on their sleeve or breast. Thus, every great nobleman had at his disposal an army of liveried soldiers numbering in some cases several thousands. The end of the Hundred Years War caused England to be flooded with veteran soldiers, who had neither the ability nor the inclination to engage in peaceful occupations. They were only too glad to join the retainers of some great noble; and nothing would please them better than a chance of more war, which would mean more plunder. Thus, after the Hundred Years War, 'the curse of war came home to roost' in the Wars of the Roses.

(*b*) Long before the so-called Wars of the Roses began, the country was full of private wars and pitched battles. These private wars only needed to be correlated and given a political organisation to become a civil war. This was done by the coming to blows of two great factions, whose roots lay deep in the past two centuries. It is hardly fanciful to trace the existence of a Lancastrian party as far back as the troubles of Edward II.'s reign and the execution of Thomas of Lancaster (Mar. 17, 1322), the leader of the Lords Ordainers. Ever since this time there had existed a 'Lancastrian' party, which stood for government by the baronage, as against strong

monarchy supported by the mass of the people. The leadership of this party fell to John of Gaunt in the next reign; and under Richard II. the Lords Appellant are the apostles of Lancastrianism. With the abdication of Richard the Lancastrians become supreme, and the baronage rather than the king have the political power. The opposition now consists mostly of middle-class people, such as were likely to benefit by a strong monarchy. They are found in supporters of the Mortimers, supporters of the pseudo-Richard II., Lollards, and other disturbers of the peace during the reign of Henry IV. The beginning of Henry V.'s reign was equally troubled; but his great victories in France brought popular opinion over, for the first and the last time, to the Lancastrians. As soon as they began to lose ground all their old unpopularity reappeared in a far more violent form, in unceasing popular disturbances. There soon grew up a cleavage between a peace party, led by Cardinal Beaufort, who believed in getting good terms while as yet there was time, and a war party, led by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who gained great popularity by standing for a more vigorous and efficient management of the war. With the death of these two leaders (1447), the peace party shows itself as Lancastrian, under the Dukes of Somerset and Suffolk, and the war party falls under the leadership of Richard, Duke of York, who as great-grandson of Edward III.'s second son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, had a better right to the throne than the reigning king (who was only a descendant of Edward's third son, John of Gaunt). Richard had on his side a great Yorkist party, composed of elements that had always been opposed to the House of Lancaster, but had not hitherto found any sufficient

focus for their discontent. It included comparatively few barons, but it had the support of London and the great towns, and the trading classes in general. They stood for strong and efficient government, a vigorous prosecution of the war, so long as it was possible, and the putting down of baronial anarchy.

The country was, as we have already seen, in a state of anarchy for sheer lack of government, long before the Yorkists and Lancastrians fought as such. There were private wars on a large scale going on everywhere, like that between Lord Bonville and the Earl of Devon. With the outbreak of hostilities on a national scale the parties to private wars ranged themselves, the one on one side, the other on the opposite side, with very little reference to any political principles for which York and Lancaster stood.

From before the middle of the Fifteenth Century, therefore, England was plunged in ceaseless war for over forty years. Few took much part in it except the great barons and their retainers and livery men. The towns looked on and favoured York—but not so much as to be willing to risk their necks on his behalf. The battles were fought in a historical twilight like that of the Dark Ages, caused by a lack of chronicles and other sources; and England touched its low water-mark of civilisation. It is true, as has been so frequently stated, that town life and business went on uninterruptedly during the Wars of the Roses. But mere town dwelling and trading was not the great source of medieval civilisation. The intellectual leadership of the nation had hitherto come more from the country than from the town. It was, for instance, the knights of the shire, not the burgesses, who distinguished themselves in the House of Commons.

The knights had often travelled widely and had great experience, and no little learning, as appears so often in the Paston Letters. The burgesses, on the other hand, were men of a very restricted horizon and narrow education. Moreover, the population of the towns, in spite of its great increase during the previous three centuries, represented only a very small fraction of the population of the country. London, which was far larger than any other three towns of the country put together, did not contain much more than 50,000 people. The majority of the English people, and those who counted most in England, still lived on the land and by the land in villages. These it was, who had their standard of civilisation fearfully lowered by the Wars of the Roses. Life became harder, coarser, more brutal. Many of the amenities of life disappeared ; and, owing to the constant strife and the desire to be on the winning side, men's moral character and principle deteriorated. There grew up a generation of opportunists that had utterly forgotten the faithfulness and chivalry of earlier generations.

Moreover, even in the case of the towns, it is a mistake to suppose that they remained untouched by the decline of civilisation and morals around them. The craft gilds, which had formerly been democratic brotherhoods, had now become narrow and selfish oligarchies of capitalists. The poor journeymen, who could no longer become members of the gild, found every avenue of success in life closed to them. They soon formed gilds of their own for self-protection, but their gilds were banned through the influence of the craft gilds, and driven underground. The journeymen were reduced to making religion a cloak for their trades unions ; and many of the religious gilds for worship at the shrine of some saint,

which are found at this period, are really journeymen's gilds. Thus, the inside of many English towns was seething with discontent. Also, many towns, such as Lincoln and Winchester, suffered a serious decline, owing to secessions of large bodies of journeymen. In many cases journeymen would migrate in large bodies, and settle outside the liberties of their town or in some remote village, like Birmingham, where they might pursue their manufactures in peace and be free from the tyranny of the craft gild.

§ 5. Thus the history of civilisation in medieval England ends in darkness, a collapse of government, religion, morals, art and culture, so far as the nation as a whole is concerned. These things only survived in isolated places. It only remains to indicate how, from this chaos of the Wars of the Roses, there gradually emerged some of the main features of modern civilisation. Nearly every region of Western Europe suffered from devastating wars of one kind or another during the Fifteenth Century. These wars, preceded as they were by the Black Death, had a similar effect on them all, viz. the destruction of medieval civilisation, and the gradual emergence of a new, *i.e.* modern, civilisation in its place. England's devastating war was about the last to finish. She was, therefore, one of the last countries in Western Europe to develop the new system of civilisation.

(*a*) One of the first great features of modern civilisation to emerge from the chaos was a series of strong national monarchies. Medieval Europe had been an aggregate of municipalities and of feudal fiefs. The monarch's effective power did not extend far beyond his own estates. One monarch often ruled over peoples of many different races, languages and traditions. And a

people one in race, language and tradition was often nominally ruled by several monarchs. Now, nationality becomes increasingly the basis of the state, and the state is really governed by its monarch. The success of the Yorkists in England led to the strong monarchy of Edward IV., who strove consistently to emancipate himself from the control of Parliament by getting rich enough to dispense with its grants. His labours were completed by the House of Tudor, who established an efficient despotism, which ruled through a council of experts rather than through Parliament. The representative estates of most of the countries in Europe fell out of use as obsolete, and Parliament in England only survived by the skin of its teeth.

(*b*) The Yorkists and the Tudors were enabled to set up their strong monarchy, largely owing to the fact that the great territorial nobility had either met their death in the Hundred Years War, or exterminated one another in the Wars of the Roses. The great weight of armour worn by nobles during the Fifteenth Century made escape impossible for them in case of defeat, as they usually fought on foot and would be unable to get back to their horses in time to escape their lightly-armed pursuers ; nor, should they reach their horses, would they be able to mount without the aid of a squire. Queen Margaret, after the battle of Wakefield, set the example of executing all noble prisoners, and the Yorkists were not slow to imitate it. It was Edward's boast that he always gave the order in battle to slay the nobles and spare the common people. The result was that few of the old nobility survived to be executed under the House of York and the House of Tudor. Their place was taken by the middle class, whose growing wealth and

importance in war brought them to the front. They were too insignificant individually to be a danger to the crown, and as a body they were anxious for that internal peace and good government that strong monarchy alone could provide. Their longing for peace overcame almost all other considerations, and the bogey of a new civil war terrified them into acquiescence in the bloody tyranny of the earlier Tudors.

This predominance of the middle class at the end of the Middle Ages is not only due to the disappearance of the old nobility and to the importance of infantry in war. It is the result also of the commercial prosperity and the intellectual advance of this class during the latter part, especially, of the Fifteenth Century.

It is a fact, difficult to explain, but unquestionably true, that many merchants made huge fortunes even during the early part of the Fifteenth Century, in spite of the fact that the gold and silver of the Old World was becoming very scarce, owing to its export to the East in exchange for goods, and that, consequently, the price of commodities tended to go down, and thus to cause trade depression. Later on, when the discoveries of the Portuguese brought the products of India directly to Lisbon and Antwerp, and the discovery of America (1492) brought the gold and resources of the New World into the economic arena, it is not surprising to find the trading classes becoming immensely rich. Europe had formerly been hemmed in on the South and East by the Mohammedan world, with which it had comparatively little commerce. But the discovery of the mariner's compass, about the middle of the Fourteenth Century, had enabled sailors to venture into unknown seas, and gradually to turn the flanks of the Mohammedan

countries. During the latter half of the Fifteenth Century, therefore, commerce had become world-wide, and though England was backward in maritime enterprise, owing to her internal preoccupations, and came later into the field, her merchants were thriving enormously by the end of the century. Many of the great merchants of London lived in a state before which that of the nobles of the previous century would have paled into insignificance.

In addition to material wealth was an intellectual power that gradually came into the hands of the middle classes. As early as the reign of Edward III., the existence of a considerable class of educated laymen makes itself felt. Chaucer himself and many of his lay pilgrims of the *Canterbury Tales* are by no means unlettered. During the next century it becomes quite the usual thing for the gentry to send their younger sons to good schools and to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, without any intention of making them priests. In the Paston Letters, especially, we find that people of quite humble standing were well aware of the value of education. Thus, according to an enemy's account of the origin of the Paston family, Clement Paston, its ancestor in the time of Richard II., was a plain husbandman, who had "in Paston five score or six score acres of land at the most and much thereof bondland to Gemyngham Hall with a little poor water mill running by the little river there." He is said to have married a bondwoman. Yet, in spite of his poverty, he takes great care to educate his son William. The document continues: "Also the said Clement had a son William which that he set to school, and often borrowed money to put him to school." This William afterwards became a judge and a man of

great wealth and importance. When the Pastons became a powerful family, most of their sons spent some time at Cambridge. John Paston was at Trinity Hall when he was fifteen or sixteen ; and he seems to have spent five or six years there. Some of his brothers spent at least some time in Cambridge. In 1473 Walter Paston is sent up to Oxford by his mother. There he spent about six years, and then took his Bachelor's Degree. There was some possibility of his entering the priesthood, though it was not for this that he was sent to the university. For his mother warns him, " be not too hasty in taking Orders, that should bind him, till he be of 24 years or more, though he be counselled to the contrary, for often haste rueth." Like his kinsmen, he remained an educated layman—a layman, that is, so far as any university man could be called a layman. For it is probable that all students received the tonsure of minor orders. But this committed them to little or nothing. It was probably regarded at this time very much as a matter of form. The importance of learning was recognised among the Pastons even by their women folk. Thus, we find hard, old Agnes Paston writing : " Pray Greenfield to send me faithfully word by writing, how Clement Paston has done his duty in learning. And if he hath not done well, nor will not amend, pray him that he will belash him till he will amend. So did the last master and the best that ever he had at Cambridge."

The Paston Letters are of great interest, as showing that many of the poorer classes were by no means ignorant of the art of writing. Thus, for instance, Richard Calle, the bailiff, who apparently acted as a small tradesman at Framlingham, could write a very good letter. There are instances even of artisans who were capable of using the

pen. The Pastons, about the year 1470, possessed many books—some by Chaucer and Lydgate—and several volumes of Cicero, and other Latin classics, and a number of volumes on war and chivalry. It is interesting to note that their library contained at least one printed book, *The Game and Playe of Chess*, printed by Caxton.

(*c*) The widespread education of the middle classes at this time was the result of two great discoveries that have done much to change the face of the world—those of paper and of printing. The importance of paper is so vital to modern civilisation that if the paper supply of the world—could we imagine it—were to vanish, then modern civilisation would vanish with it. The government of the country and all its commerce and system of education would simply cease. Yet, Western Europe was without paper till the Middle Ages were well advanced. The civilisation of the ancient world had had the support of papyrus as a cheap writing material. It was made, according to Pliny, of the stem of the papyrus plant, which grew in abundance in the delta of the Nile. The stems of the plant were cut in strips, which were laid in two layers interwoven at right angles with one another. The mass was then dipped in water, so as to bring the gummy matter of the plant to the surface. It was then pressed, dried, and finished in such a way as to produce a cheap and good writing material of many qualities, from the high qualitied ' hieratica ' to the cheap packing paper, called ' carta emporetica.' The importance of cheap writing materials in the Roman Empire was so great, that a failure of the papyrus crop in the reign of Tiberius was said to have been a serious hindrance to the ordinary business of life. But after the fall of the Roman Empire the papyrus of the Nile Delta grew scarce, and its

export difficult. The early Middle Ages, therefore, had to do its writing on parchment, the old writing material prepared from the skins of animals. This was extremely expensive and difficult to produce, and to write upon. So long as this was the only writing material, books and learning were bound to be a monopoly of the very few. The value of one fair-sized book would equal that of many oxen ; not so much because of the labour of the copyist as from the value of his writing materials. Paper of some kind was known to the Chinese from an immemorial antiquity. It reached Europe, finally, by means of the Arabs. We are told that in the year 751 the Arab town of Samarkand was attacked by the Chinese. In repelling the attack the governor captured certain men who were skilled in paper-making and who imparted their knowledge to their new masters. From Samarkand the knowledge and practice of paper-making spread all over the Mohammedan world, and at last entered Christendom at those points where Christianity and Islam came most in contact, viz. Greece, Sicily and Spain. From these countries the art of paper-making spread to France and Germany, and paper used in this country probably came at first from the paper mills of the English possessions in the South of France or from Burgundy. One of the earliest paper manuscripts written in England, is the Register of the Hustings Court of Lyme Regis, the entries of which begin with the year 1309. Next year, 1310, the records of Merton, Oxford, allude to the purchase of paper " for a register "—perhaps, of books borrowed from the college library. As the century advances, the use of paper for such purposes grows commoner, though there seems to be no trace of the actual manufacture of paper in this country till Tudor times. The earliest recorded

English paper is that used by Wynkyn de Worde in 1495. But the price of paper went down steadily as the Middle Ages advanced. In the middle of the Fourteenth Century the price of a quire of small folio paper was fivepence. In the Fifteenth Century it was threepence or fourpence, and at the end of the century sometimes sank as low as twopence, thus for the first time placing writing materials within the reach of the more prosperous middle-class people. Hence the existence of those many priceless letters of the Fifteenth Century, such as the Stonor or the Paston Letters, from which so many homely details of the life and the mentality of the ordinary man and woman have come down to us.

(*d*) Without paper the art of printing would have been useless. Printing came in to complete the civilising work of paper. Printing of some kind seems to have been practised in Asia from very remote times. Block printing, for instance, was done in China as early as the Second Century of our era ; and printed books were very common in the Tenth Century. The Chinese are said to have printed with movable types made of clay, in the middle of the Eleventh Century. Later on the use of metal types is supposed to have been invented by the Koreans. But, as far as is known, the art of printing in Europe developed independently of any influence from the East. From very early medieval times, kings and nobles had their monograms cut on blocks of wood or metal, in order to impress them on their charters, and from the Twelfth Century onwards manuscripts often show a uniformity in their initial letters which suggests that these letters were impressed by means of a stamp. By the beginning of the Fifteenth Century block printing was well developed. A picture would be cut out on a

block of wood and copies printed from it. The earliest surviving example of a picture printed in this way is the 'Mary Engraving,' discovered at Malines, and now preserved in the Brussels Royal Library. It is dated 1418. But there is every reason to suppose that printing from wood-cut blocks was practised for at least a generation before this. Thus, the registers of the monastery of Ulm mention a wood engraver, named Ulrich, in 1398. The block printers often printed a number of pictures with a small amount of letterpress under each, and bound them together in the form of a book. These block books became increasingly common during the earlier part of the Fifteenth Century. The *Biblia Pauperum*, a book of pictures of well-known biblical incidents, had a very wide circulation. Block printing was so easy that many private persons kept sets of blocks, in order to print off a page for anyone who wanted one; and monasteries often printed off a set of sheets for sale to a passing pilgrim. The lines to be printed from the block were engraved in relief as in a modern wood engraving. It was wetted with a watery solution, and then a piece of damp paper was laid upon it. The back of the paper was rubbed with a 'frotton' till an impression from the ridges of the carved block had been transferred to the paper. This method made it impossible to print both sides of a page. In a block-book, therefore, pages are usually pasted in pairs, back to back, in order that it may have the appearance of an ordinary book.

The great discovery of the Fifteenth Century was the use of movable type, which could be distributed and used again and again for years, till they were worn out. The first known document printed in this way is a letter of Pope Nicholas V., offering an indulgence to those who

would help to deliver the kingdom of Cyprus from the Turk. The surviving copies of this are dated with various dates in October and November of the year 1454.

Who, then, was responsible for the great invention that superseded block printing, by the modern method of using movable types some time before October 1454? Two answers have been given to this question. The one is Johan Gutenburg of Mainz, and the other is Lourens Janzoon Coster of Haarlem. Into the arguments that have been advanced in favour of one or other of these claimants it is not necessary to enter. Suffice it to say, that until twenty years ago, Gutenburg was regarded as the inventor, largely owing to the researches and to the imagination of certain German scholars, who sought to reduce Coster to a myth. In actual fact, Gutenburg never, as far as is known, claimed to be the inventor of the new method of printing, neither did anyone else credit him with the invention till long after his death. A chronicle printed at Cologne in 1499 definitely states that this kind of printing was first 'prefigured' in Holland and was improved at Mainz. The earliest information we have of Gutenburg is derived from a lawsuit tried in Strasburg in 1436. In 1455 we have a record of him as a printer in a lawsuit to recover some money which had been lent to him. Some time before the year 1468 he appears to have died, as his stock of printing materials was then handed over to his chief creditor. That is almost all the contemporary information which we possess about him. But the idea gradually grew up, especially in Italy, whither the art of printing was carried by Germans, that the art was a German discovery. From this it was but a step to make Gutenburg of Mainz the discoverer.

Further research makes it much more probable that Coster, an innkeeper of Haarlem, made the discovery. He began by block printing, and then about the year 1440 hit upon the use of movable types, and with them printed some copies of Donatus' Grammar and other school books. His types were, perhaps, according to the evidence of Junius of Antwerp (1588), stolen by an assistant, who set up a press at Mainz about 1442 and printed several books with the stolen types. In any case, there are several very clumsy and crude specimens of printing in existence, which are now generally admitted to be Coster's work and to be earlier than anything of Gutenburg's.

So much for the great controversy. The art of printing, once invented, spread rapidly. Printing was done at Strasburg in 1460. It was introduced into Italy in 1465 by Conrad Sweynheyn and Arnold Pannarts, who set up their press first in the monastery of Subiaco and, afterwards, in Rome. Cologne possessed nine or ten printers before 1480. Printing was, therefore, a somewhat belated visitor when John Caxton set up the first printing press ever seen in England in the year 1477. He had been apprenticed by his parents in London to the trade of a mercer (1438), the most lucrative one of the day, after having been given a good education ; as he says in his prologue to his *Charles the Grete*—"I am bounden to pray for my fader and moder's souls that in my youthe sent me to schoole, by which by the sufferance of God I gete my living, I hope truly." He lived about thirty years of his life in the great city of Bruges, where he filled the important post of Governor of the English merchants there. As a middle-aged man he seems to have taken a greater interest in literature than in trade ;

for in 1468 he began to translate into English the popular romance, *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*. Whilst doing so, he enjoyed the favour of Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV., and gave up trade altogether, in order to enter her service and gain more time for literature. On Sept. 19, 1471, he finished his translation in Cologne. He found the book, when he published it, in such demand, that, in order to multiply copies more rapidly, he decided to learn the newly-discovered art of printing. Hence, in the year 1474 the first book in the English language was printed, not in England, but either in Bruges or Cologne—most probably the former. After printing several English books at Bruges, Caxton removed to England and set up his press at the sign of the Red Pale, near the Almonry of Westminster Abbey. On Nov. 18, 1477, the first book was printed in England, *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*. Caxton enjoyed the favour of the Yorkist kings and their many cultivated followers, such as Earl Rivers, Tiptoft Earl of Worcester and the Earl of Essex ; and his industry seems to have been immense. In fourteen years he printed more than 18,000 pages—nearly all of folio size—comprising nearly eighty separate books ; and he did all this apparently with the aid of three or four assistants. His work as a translator and writer was also remarkable. He tells us that he translated twenty-one books from the French and one from the Dutch. His free and idiomatic translations were of no small importance in fixing the literary language of the Sixteenth Century.

Caxton has often been adversely criticised on the ground that he used his press to multiply popular medieval works ; but made no use of his opportunities

to spread the 'new learning' derived from the classics of Greece and Rome. This criticism is fairly justified, as Caxton was not a scholar in the highest sense of the word. His deficiencies were somewhat supplied by a press which was set up at Oxford only one year after his own had been set up at Westminster. It was worked for nine years by Theodoric Rood of Cologne, who took into partnership an Englishman named Thomas Hunte, a stationer of the university. They produced about fifteen learned works, including Cicero's speech in defence of Milo (the *Pro Milone*), the first Latin classic to be printed in England. The first book printed at this press was an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, ascribed to S. Jerome, which bears the date 1468.

This gave rise to a theory that Oxford had a press years before the time of Caxton. It is now generally admitted that the date 1468 is an error, such as is frequently found in early printed books, and that it should be 1478. However, it is just conceivable, but not probable, that some printing was done at Oxford before Caxton set up his press in this country. The next book to be printed was Artemus' Latin translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachaean Ethics*—one of the most important books studied in the university at that time. For some unknown reason the Oxford press, after printing about fifteen books in all, suddenly stopped in the winter of 1486-7, as also, curiously enough, did the hereundermentioned S. Albans press at just about the same time; and Oxford apparently remained without a press for about thirty years.

Another press, chiefly to supply learned works in theology, was set up at S. Albans two years later (1480) by one who, for want of his name, is commonly known as

'the Schoolmaster.' The same year Caxton was faced by a formidable rival in London, a foreign printer named John Lettou—formidable because he printed much better and more neatly than Caxton, and took care to let everyone know it. Caxton was, therefore, obliged to improve his methods, and the rivalry between the two did much to improve the art of printing in England. The English presses were at first unable to produce books of a highly ornamental, illustrated character, such as fine illuminated service books, especially missals imitated from the monkish manuscripts. These were, therefore, printed for the English market in Paris. But the rivalry of English printers, such as Caxton and Lettou and their successors, soon raised English printing to the level of almost anything that was done on the Continent.

The great importance of the invention of printing is that it placed the possession, or, at any rate, the loan of books within the reach of all but the very poorest. The old manuscript books had been of immense value, some of them having taken a considerable portion of a man's span of life to produce. As early as 1467, the Bishop of Aleria, writing to Pope Paul II., speaks of the invention of printing as having reduced prices to one-fifth of what they had previously been. The new printed books at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century must have been about one-twentieth of the price of the old manuscript books. Thus, for instance, a printed sheet containing a ballad or Christmas carol was sold at this time for a halfpenny, and a thin quarto chapbook for fourpence. The Great Bible of 1541 was priced at ten shillings in sheets, or twelve shillings bound. The first Prayer Book of Edward VI. (1549) was two shillings and twopence

unbound, or three and eightpence bound. In the Middle Ages a man had to influence great masses of his fellows by the spoken word. This was the case even among the comparatively learned at the universities. Now it is the pen, rather than the tongue, that begins to become a power in the world, and has to be controlled by the governments of Europe. A man, who could formerly only address hundreds with his voice, could now address thousands all over the civilised world by sending his manuscript to a printing press.

(*e*) Just at the time when the art of printing was growing to perfection, Western Europe discovered something worth printing. This was the Greek learning of the Ancient World, which had been preserved in Constantinople, and had been gradually crossing over to the scholars of Italy for more than a century, when, in 1453, the Turks killed the goose that laid the golden eggs by the capture of the great city. Towards the end of the century the presses of Italy began to pour forth beautifully printed copies of the poets, philosophers and historians of Ancient Greece—the fountain head of most things that really matter in the intellectual and artistic treasuries of the human race. Greek learning, as has been so often repeated in history books, taught men to think and to feel at a time when thought and art had become stereotyped and lifeless. Greek literature restored progress to a world that was standing still or sliding backwards down the slope it had ascended. It taught men to question all things, and gave them an immense hunger to know. It taught them to love beauty because it is beautiful, goodness because it is good, truth because it is true. It set men on that course of scientific research, political development, and social

amelioration, from which they have never altogether turned back.

§ 6. While endorsing the truth of all the claims made in favour of Greek learning we must, none the less, be careful to notice what is so often forgotten, viz. that it was the Fifteenth Century, not the true Middle Ages, that were rescued by Greek learning from stagnation and decay. The true Middle Age, which extends from the Dark Ages to the ravages of the Black Death and the Hundred Years War was one of the most progressive ages that the world has ever known. With the decay of the Roman Empire in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, the forests of Germany belched forth their savage hordes, who slaughtered their enemies in cold blood and burnt their prisoners alive as holocausts to their gods, and drank wine out of their enemies' skulls. These men were transformed by the Christian civilisation of the Middle Ages into the 'parfait gentile knight' of Chaucer's prologue; into the builders of those Gothic cathedrals, the peers of which neither ancient nor modern civilisation can produce; into matchless saints of the type of S. Francis of Assisi; into scholars of the vast industry and breadth of view of Roger Bacon. We are accustomed to speak with awe of the progress our world has made during the past century—but that is mostly, after all, only material progress, and very much on the surface. It is small compared with the deeper progress of the Middle Ages—progress which is as deep as the lowest depths of man's soul.

This progress was, as we have seen, arrested in the latter half of the Fourteenth Century, as all great progressive civilisations seem doomed to be arrested in one way or another. Sometimes they are arrested by sudden

and awful destruction, as in the case of Assyria, Babylonia or Persia. Sometimes they seem to get stricken by paralysis, as in the case of China, Greece and Rome. Medieval civilisation was arrested and destroyed by pestilence, which spared not a single acre of Europe, and by a series of wars from which very few acres were exempt. Then came the opportunity of Greek learning to raise up civilisation in the new Dark Age into which the Middle Age had descended.

With the advent of the 'new learning' the modern age has arrived, and this sketch of medieval England comes to an end. While admitting the many advantages that we possess over medieval man, let us not be forgetful of the many priceless legacies which he has bequeathed to us, and which no amount of ancient civilisation could have produced. Parliamentary government, trial by jury, universities, industrial co-operation, Gothic architecture, chivalry, romance—all these have many shortcomings, but life without them would be infinitely poorer and narrower than it is. To understand these things they must be studied historically, and not to understand them is to fail to understand the modern world around us. Hence it is that the study of the Middle Ages, especially in England, can never lose its interest or its value for mankind.

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The dates enclosed in brackets after a person's name are those of his birth and death. fl. = floruit. b. = born. d. = died. The figures refer to pages. Dates are usually reckoned according to the old style.

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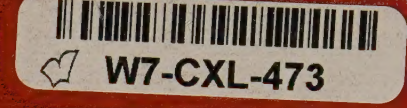
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